



# GLOBAL MUSLIM DIASPORA

Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-OIC Member States



## GERMANY

*Country Report Series*



ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION  
STATISTICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH  
AND TRAINING CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES



GLOBAL MUSLIM DIASPORA:  
MUSLIM COMMUNITIES AND MINORITIES IN NON-OIC MEMBER STATES



COUNTRY REPORT SERIES

# GERMANY



Organization of Islamic Cooperation

**The Statistical, Economic and Social Research and  
Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)**



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Kudüs Cad. No: 9, Diplomatik Site, 06450 Oran, Ankara –Turkey

Telephone +90–312–468 6172

Internet [www.sesric.org](http://www.sesric.org)

E-mail [pubs@sesric.org](mailto:pubs@sesric.org)

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For additional information, contact the Research Department through [research@sesric.org](mailto:research@sesric.org).

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## Acronyms

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BAMF	German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees - <i>Bundesrat für Migration und Flüchtlinge</i>
DITIB	Turkish-Islamic Union of the Office for Religious Affairs- <i>Türkisch-Islamische Union der Anstalt für Religion</i>
GMD	Global Muslim Diaspora
IGMG	Islamic Community <i>Millî Görüş- Islamische Gemeinschaft Millî Görüş</i>
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
SSUA	Social Sciences University of Ankara
UN	United Nations
VIKZ	Association of Islamic Cultural Centres- <i>Verband der Islamischen Kulturzentren</i>
WWII	World War II

## Foreword

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The SESRIC has launched the Global Muslim Diaspora (GMD) Project - a comprehensive research effort trying to analyse challenges, attitudes, experiences and perceptions on a range of issues related to Muslim communities and minorities living in the non-OIC Member States. The main objective of the project is to provide a range of useful comparative statistics and insights, which can help identify issues, initiate cooperation forums and shape future policy.

Islam is not only present in all continents as a religion but also as a cultural and civilizational value. Starting with the *Hijrah* of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Muslim migrants have laid the foundations for the spread of Islamic values, ideas and habits in the regions where they are settled, thus contributed to the cultural richness and economic development of these places.

Today, whenever we raise the point concerning Muslims communities and minorities living in non-OIC Member States, we have in mind a context in which Islam is present through more recent migrations. However, we should keep in mind that many of these countries have also been the homeland of its Muslims for centuries.

Despite the recent growth of literature on Muslims living in non-OIC Member States, our knowledge regarding this subject remains limited and fragmented. The GMD project intends to fill this gap through engaging more closely with the representatives of Muslim communities and minorities in different countries.

In context of GMD project, it is with great pleasure that I present to you the report on Germany, which affords the political elites, policy makers, analysts and general public the opportunity to understand how the Muslims in Germany view the most pressing issues they face today. The report on Germany is based on two basic pillars: desk research and fieldwork – conducted by travelling to Germany. Survey and workshop with representatives of Muslim communities and minorities and in-depth interviews with Muslim and non-Muslim public opinion leaders are the main components of this fieldwork study, whose results are integrated within the report.

I would like to encourage the readers of this report to have a look on the GMD general report titled “Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-OIC Member States: Diagnostics, Concepts, Scope and Methodology”, which inter alia provides description of methodology and research activities applied when preparing the report on Germany.

The development of this report has involved the dedication, skills and efforts of many individuals, to whom I would like to thank.

Amb. Musa Kulaklıkaya  
Director General  
SESRIC

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The Germany case report has been prepared by Onur Unutulmaz and Servet Erdem, with contributions of Erdal Akdeve, Gürol Baba. Prof. Dr. Mehmet Barca, Rector of SSUA, supervised and contributed to the preparation of this report. Clive Campbell proofread the document.

Amb. Musa Kulaklıkaya, Director General of the SESRIC, provided pivotal leadership during the preparation of the report. Several SESRIC members also contributed to the finalization of the report, including Dr. Kenan Bağcı, Acting Director of Economic and Social Research Department, and Dr. Erhan Türbedar, Researcher, who coordinated the report on behalf of SESRIC. Kaan Namli, Researcher, edited the report and Fatma Nur Zengin, Events and Communications Specialist, facilitated the fieldworks.

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## Executive Summary

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This report aims to contribute to the literature and public debate on diasporic Muslim communities by providing a comprehensive outlook on the principle aspects of the Muslim community in Germany. The data presented and analysed in this report were collected using several primary data collection methods and a review of the existing secondary sources. Nine in-depth interviews with key Muslim and non-Muslim individuals were conducted during a field visit in Berlin between 10 October and 15 October 2017. To complement the in-depth interviews, a survey was also conducted with a sample of 151 Muslim individuals in October and November of 2017. Lastly, on 14 October 2017, a workshop was organized with the participation of representatives from Muslim and non-Muslim NGOs, municipalities, and media organisations.

Today, Islam has become a visible aspect of the German society. The number of Muslims living in Germany is around 4.5 to 4.8 million, which accounts for more than 5% of the German population. However, this relatively recent development came into existence as an unexpected by-product of the German economic recovery era in the aftermath of World War II. Germany had consistently rejected to view itself as a country of immigration up until a couple of decades ago.

The Muslim community in Germany is diverse in its ethnic, national, cultural, and religious composition. The significant majority of Muslims in Germany are of Turkish origin. According to recent studies, in 2015, the Turks made up 63.2% of the Muslim community in Germany. This number has decreased to 50% recently due to the significant inflow of Syrian and other groups. However, studies also show that the overall Muslim population in Germany has undergone any significant transformation. Therefore, a radical shift in the ethnic composition of Muslim population in Germany is not likely in the near future.

Overall, the Muslim community in Germany reported the legal system, strong democracy, rule of law and human rights as well as the social welfare state as the main strengths of residing in Germany. However, field study results pointed out that the Muslim community in Germany still faces racism, Islamophobia and discrimination in their daily lives. In other words, while happy with the German constitution and legal system, they urge for practice to be improved in the vigilant implementation of the laws and protection of Muslims from discrimination.

In socio-economical terms, Muslims appear to be at a disadvantage when compared to the mainstream German society with respect to economic earnings as well as educational attainment. In two particular ways, this is partly the legacy of the guest-worker migration

schemes. Firstly, these schemes largely attracted individuals from lower socio-economic and less-educated backgrounds, complicating the integration process not only for these individual migrants, but also for their children and grandchildren in the generations to come. Secondly, since this migration was expected to be just temporary by both the German government and the guest workers themselves, efforts for integration did not start until many years later. There is, however, much cause for hope today as the new generation of young Muslims make their way into every realm of the economy, society, and politics.

One significant finding from the Germany field study was the high levels of reported sense of belonging by Muslims to not only Islam and their respective ethnic communities or countries of origin, but also to Germany. What is more, when explicitly asked whether they thought that there is a contradiction between the Muslim identity and the German identity for a young Muslim, the respondents overwhelmingly suggested that there was not. In other words, contrary to the arguments of the rising Islamophobic and far right political movements, Muslims in Germany argue that they can be and they are proudly Muslim and proudly German at the same time.

Another significant finding was that Muslims in Germany lack trust in many institutions and individuals. In fact, the respondents in our study indicated an above average level of trust only to the legal system in Germany. To all the other institutions and individuals listed in the question about trust which included the German government and the police force, Muslim leaders in Germany and the leaders of Muslim countries, the EU and the UN, the Muslim NGOs in Germany, they manifested a lack of trust. At the bottom of this list was the German media, which are the least trusted and the one blamed for negatively representing Muslims.

There were strong voices who suggested that Muslims were also responsible for their negative image and lack of representation because they were unable to unify and mobilize as one group. Accordingly, the much-fragmented nature of the Muslim community has meant that Muslims were not able to enjoy the commensurate levels of influence and impact in society as would be expected from their size and significance.

It should be highlighted that Muslims in Germany are concerned about the recent developments in the country and around the globe, and they are worried about their future. More specifically, respondents overall have suggested that the rise of extremist political currents and the increasing electoral success of far-right parties such as AfD fuels Islamophobia and racism in Germany. They also believe that this trend will continue in the near future and these populist movements and discourses will keep rising. Therefore, Muslims in Germany seem to have a rather pessimistic future projection where a majority of individuals expect that their lives will be worse than today in 10 years. It is of paramount importance that all relevant stakeholders address the worries and concerns of the Muslims in Germany properly. If this can be managed, the well-integrated Muslim minority could be a source of tremendous strength and dynamism for Germany and for every society of which they are a part.

# 1 Introduction: Context and Background

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A study conducted for the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (*Bundesrat für Migration und Flüchtlinge*- in short BAMF) predicted that the number of Muslims living in Germany is between 4.4 and 4.7 million, accounting for the 5.4-5.7% of the population (Stichs, 2016: 5). This figure is definitely larger today because Germany continues to be an immigrant receiving country, and more particularly, Germany has been the country that received the highest number of Syrian refugees in Western Europe.

Today, Islam is a visible aspect of the German society. However, as the next section on the historical context reveals, this relatively recent development came into existence as an unexpected by-product of German economic recovery plan in the aftermath of World War II. Following a selective account on the historical background, the legal and political context in Germany concerning Muslim communities is presented in the following section.

This report is the product of an intensive fieldwork conducted in Berlin on 10-15 October 2017 in the framework of the Global Muslim Diaspora (GMD) Project. Before presenting and discussing the findings of the fieldwork the following, few sections will provide a background and contextual information on Germany.

## 1.1 Islam in Germany: A Brief Historical Context

While mass immigration of Muslims came in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, presence of Muslims in Germany can be traced back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, following the second Vienna siege of Ottomans in 1683 (Thielman, 2008: 2). In addition to the members of the Ottoman diplomatic mission in Prussia, a small but continuous Muslim community existed since then. In fact, the first Muslim cemetery in the country was established at the Columbiadamm in Berlin in 1798 following the death of Ali Aziz Efendi, the third Ottoman envoy (*Ibid*). The establishment of the first mosque was recorded during the First World War, when the Ottomans and Germans fought together, albeit for a brief period, in a camp for prisoners of war near Berlin. Muslims from 41 different nations in the name of “*Islamische Gemeinde Berlin*” (Islamic Community Berlin) established the first known Muslim civil society organization in 1922. In the same year, German Muslims established a mosque in Berlin, and shortly after a journal named “*Deutsch-Moslemische Gesellschaft*” (German Muslim Society), which is published with the same name since 1930 (cf. Abdullah, 1981: 27-31).

As stated, however, until the mass immigration of *Gast-arbeiters* (guest workers) in the 1960s, the number of Muslims in Germany remained negligible. These immigrants came in the context of post-WWII economic recovery of the German industries, which were devastated by the most destructive war witnessed in human history. At the end of the war, one of the biggest vulnerabilities of the war-

torn German economy was an extremely weakened labour market, both in terms of human capital and sheer number of actively employable individuals, in addition to financial draught. The financial problem was significantly solved through major economic assistance of the United States through the so-called 'Marshall Plan'. The US did not want to lose the biggest economy in central Europe to communism in the context of an emerging Cold War between the communist Eastern bloc, headed by the Soviet Union, and the capitalist democracies of the Western bloc. Therefore, the Marshall Plan aimed to help the economic recovery and development of the European countries through generous financial support.

The Marshall Plan provided the much-needed financial foundation, but the next biggest challenge was to create the necessary human resources. With millions of people either dead or displaced during the War, the German government, like many of the other governments in Western European countries, decided to bring in the necessary labour from abroad. While the first bilateral agreements were made with Southern European countries such as Greece and Yugoslavia, the large volume of labour required made it necessary to widen the geographical scope of such arrangements. Therefore, the first bilateral labour agreement with Turkey was agreed upon in 1961. This date constitutes a major turning point in the history of Germany and its Muslim communities because nearly 56 years after the agreement, Germany has become the country with the largest Turkish diasporic community and the country amongst the Western democracies with the largest and most diverse Muslim community.

Before going into the details of these agreements and the number of people immigrated through them, a brief parenthesis is warranted to explain why Turkey so readily agreed to this scheme. In stark contrast with the economic situation *vis a vis* labour in Germany, Turkey at the time had a large and growing labour force for whom full employment was not possible. In fact, there was a significant, and perhaps chronic, problem of unemployment in Turkish economy in the 1950s and 60s. In such a context, temporary labour emigration presented Turkey, and other developing economies with unemployment problems, with several advantages.

Firstly, it made it possible to reduce unemployment by sending off hundreds of thousands of job-seeking individuals abroad. Secondly, it did not create any deficiency in terms of the skill pool in the labour market because Germany and other labour importing countries sought mostly unskilled labour to be employed at manual jobs in factories. Thirdly, since those workers went to Germany on a temporary basis and in most cases they left at least some family members behind, they created a financial inflow of foreign currency in the form of workers' remittances, which was crucial for the development of the national economy. Last but not the least, it was meant to lead to skill accumulation and economic development, as these workers would return to their country at the end of their contracts and use their newly obtained skills for the development of the national economy.

The bilateral labour agreements are by definition inter-national arrangements between two national governments. As already mentioned, in the German case, the largest number of workers was imported through such agreements with Turkey. Most of the time these involved two or 3-year contracts for individual workers in Germany. The workers were selected and recruited by Turkish government agencies. The obvious underlying logic of such schemes was that they would be continued as long as the demand in the receiving economy remained and that they would stop when importation of foreign

workers was no longer needed. For the above-cited reasons, this temporary worker arrangement was a win-win situation for all sides. However, the reality did not quite fit the initial expectations as the employers wanted to work repeatedly with their already trained workers and workers wanted to keep working in Germany for prolonged periods to save more money. As a result, many Muslim workers were united with their families in Germany and were settling down for longer periods.

The bilateral labour agreements came to a swift end in 1973, largely because of the so-called ‘OPEC oil crisis’ and the ensuing stagnation in the oil-dependent European economies. In the new economic context where economy was no longer expanding, there was no longer any need for foreign labour. Therefore, the migrant workers who were seen as temporary guests and economically useful sources of cheap labour became ‘immigrants’. Many of them were to become permanent members of the German society. What Max Frisch, a Swiss novelist, said about guest workers in Switzerland can also be said about all the Western European countries that made bilateral labour agreements: “We asked for workers. We got people instead”.

Today, Germany appears to have come to terms with its changed reality, both concerning the permanence of the former labour migrants and the fact that it had become an immigration country. However, the time it took Germany to accept this changed reality was costly: for a long time there were no integration policies or government schemes attempting to ease the harmonization of Muslim immigrants with the German society. Most guest workers had to reside in the suburbs, isolated from the wider society, which resulted in them not needing to learn the language or interact socially with anyone besides their co-ethnics (Abadan-Unat, 2017).

On the part of the Muslim immigrants, they also did not pay any significant effort to integrate because most of them considered their presence in the country as temporary. As a result, for the first generation immigrants, social and cultural integration was very difficult, if not altogether impossible. This situation has also had negative implications for the integration process of the second generation, who often suffered from a ‘culture shock’ between the German school and public space, and the Turkish or Muslim home (Abadan-Unat, 2017). Germany has since moved away from this mistake and became a country that pays great attention to integration policies and peaceful cohabitation in society.

## 1.2 Legal and Political Context in Germany

The above-discussed historical background is a very important starting point for understanding the debates about cultural diversity and diasporic communities in Germany. The immense and irreversible ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity in the country is often considered an unexpected and undesired by-product of post-WWII economic policies. The immigrants were meant to be temporary guests and instead they radically changed the social fabric of German society for good. In fact, Germany did not want to accept this transformation for a long time. Until well into the 1980s and 1990s, Germany did not consider itself as an ‘immigration country’ and its legal and political context reflected this position. Once the country finally came to terms with its changed social reality and acknowledged the irreversible nature of ethnic and cultural diversity, it started to change its legal and political context in a way to respond to the challenges created by this new social fabric.

### 1.2.1 Religious Freedom

As in most European states, in Germany religious freedom is far reaching. European constitutions, as in Article 9 of the ECHR, guarantee that people will not be deprived of the basic requirements for complying with the demands of their religion. No Muslim will be prevented by the state from adhering to the ‘five pillars’ of Islam, for example. Everybody may consult renowned Muslims or Muslim institutions for advice in religious matters (Rohe, 2004b: 173), which opens up broad space for actively practicing one’s religion privately as well as in the public. However, as we know, there are remarkable differences concerning different states’ perspective on religious freedom, particularly in the public sphere. The case of France is a striking example on this point (see GMD France Country Report).

In Germany, the most important provision to regulate religious affairs is Article 4, Sections 1 and 2, of the German Constitution. It is as follows:

Article 4 [Freedom of faith, conscience, and creed]

- (1) Freedom of faith and conscience, and freedom to profess a religious or philosophical creed, shall be inviolable.
- (2) The undisturbed practice of religion shall be guaranteed.

Article 4 is not limited to private religious conviction. It also grants the public manifestation of belief and the state is obliged to ensure that this right is not limited (Rohe, 2008: 52). Of course, there are legal limits to rights as such, including religious ones. For example, nobody is allowed to threaten others on religious grounds. Furthermore, Article 3, Section 3, of the German Constitution prescribes that no-one may be discriminated against, or given preferential treatment, on the grounds of their religious belief (Rohe, 2008: 53).

Therefore, it can be suggested that the secular legal order in Germany does not reject religion; neither can it be called anti-religious. On the contrary, it opens a broad space for religious beliefs and ways of life. The fact is that the state itself has to be neutral and it is prevented from interference in religious affairs. The most important result of this legal secularism is the equality before the law of all religions and the freedom of the individual not to adhere to any religious grouping and the freedom to change one’s religious affiliation at will (Bielefeldt, 2003: 15). According to a unanimous understanding in Europe, this neutrality is a prerequisite of true religious freedom, which cannot be dispensed. However, in practice, such neutrality of the state and ‘equality of all religions under law’ are sometimes disputed, as in the case of the legal status of state recognition of Muslim NGOs, which has been denied for decades in Germany (see the next section).

### 1.2.2 The Legal Status of Muslim NGOs

It can be argued that the secular legal order in Germany does not reject religion. The realization that mostly Turkish Muslim guest workers was going to be permanent residents of the German society started to be consolidated in the 1980s. It is during this period that the policy of the German government to facilitate the return of the workers to their country of origin through generous incentive packages largely failed. Also in the latter half of 1970s and throughout 1980s, the existing body of

immigrant workers grew steadily through family reunifications and the arrival of asylum-seekers from Turkey and the Middle East. It should also be noted that the existing immigrant networks made it increasingly easier, cheaper and safer to immigrate.

The establishment of the major Muslim NGOs in Germany accelerated in the 1980s for these reasons. Islamische Gemeinschaft Millî Görüş (IGMG; Islamic Community Millî Görüş), for example, was founded in 1985, although its history goes back to 1973, since which time it was active under various names (Thielman, 2008: 4). IGMG was closely linked with a specific Islamic religious/political movement in Turkey, therefore, the Turkish state wanted to establish its own institution through which to keep close contacts with its (former) citizens in Turkey. For this reason, a branch of Turkey's Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı) was established in Germany in 1984 under the name of "Diyanet İşleri Türk İslâm Birliği" (DİTİB- the Türkisch-Islamische Union der Anstalt für Religion-Turkish-Islamic Union of the Office for Religious Affairs).

In addition to Millî Görüş, other organisations like the Verband der Islamischen Kulturzentren (VIKZ; Association of Islamic Cultural Centres), the German branch of the Turkish Süleymancı movement, have been active since the early 1970s. All of them have their headquarters in Cologne. The legal framework for Muslims in Germany is still a debated subject among Muslims and German jurists and politicians alike. So far, they are organised as registered associations (eingetragener Verein, e.V.) or as foundations (Stiftung). Since the 1970s, all associations have been seeking to obtain the status of a publicly recognized corporation (Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts), like the Christian churches or the Jewish community. This status would provide them with some additional rights (e.g., collection of church taxes by the state on behalf of them) and prospects, mainly in the field of education.

This issue of legal status and the procedures of its conferral by the German state have been a crucial matter and a heated controversy among the Muslim community. As discussed in the findings of the fieldwork, many of the representatives of Muslim NGOs are complaining about what they consider a double standard applied against Muslim communities. Some German respondents defend the actions of the German state because the structure of Muslim religious organizations is dramatically different from that of the Christian churches, which have a much more centralized structure with formal membership.

More specifically, the German Constitution of 1949 contains several articles which are adopted from the previous 'Weimar' Constitution of 1919 (Article 140 of the Constitution 1949) regulating a special form of organization for religious communities called 'Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts' (corporation by public law). The religious communities at the time of the enactment of the Constitution—several Christian faiths—automatically obtained this status. Others may apply for it, provided they guarantee continuity by their by-laws and the number of their members. Jurisdiction in these issues lies with the federal states. According to a decision of the conference of the state ministers of interior in 1954, the necessary stability of the community has to be proven over a period of 30 years (Rohe, 2008: 57).

The organizational form of a corporation by public law provides a number of far-reaching rights, such as the right to levy taxes from members of the community and to organize a parish, the right to employ



people under a belief-orientated labour-law, the placement of property under public property law which grants tax-reductions and the exemption of other taxes and costs, the right to nominate members to broadcasting companies along with others. It is argued that such far-reaching rights require clear structures of organization including transparent procedures for decision-making and a reliable body or bodies, which authentically decide about the doctrine and order (Vocking 1993: 100, 103; Weber 2003: 87ff). This has been presented as the main reason why Muslim organizations have failed to obtain this status, i.e. due to their structural and organizational inadequacies in the eyes of the German law.

### 1.2.3 Mosques and Prayer

Today, there are more than 2,500 mosques across Germany. While the majority of these mosques are relatively small, there are large mosques that can serve more than a 1,000 individuals at a time. Some of the mosques have minarets, and in some cities the *ad-ān* and the use of loud-speakers is allowed for certain prayers, e.g. the Friday prayer (Kraft 2002; Leggewie et al., 2002; Schmitt, 2003).

The construction of places of worship is privileged under the German law of construction due to the constitutional guarantees of religious freedom. In rare cases, there were judicial procedures initiated to clarify whether minarets are allowed, and if so, to what height. According to German laws dealing with planning and construction, the shape of places of worship has to fit into the given surroundings, despite the generally privileged status of erecting such buildings. Nevertheless, the Administrative Court of Appeal of Koblenz decided in a case concerning the erection of a minaret that the law is not intended as a “protection of the cultural status quo”. Times are changing, and as Muslims now represent a significant number of inhabitants, society as a whole will have to accept this fact (Rohe, 2008: 54).

### 1.2.4 Halal-Slaughtering

In a landmark decision, the Federal Constitutional Court decided on January 15 2002 that the freedom of religion includes the right of Muslims to slaughter animals according to their imperative religious commands. This includes forms of slaughtering without pre-stunning of the animals, which is generally forbidden by the Law on the Protection of Animals. According to Paragraph 4a of this law, a religious community may apply for a license to carry out the slaughtering according to such imperative commands. It should be mentioned that the Jewish community was granted the license to slaughtering without pre-stunning to meet their religious imperative until the takeover of the Nazi government in 1933 and were again granted the license after the defeat of the Nazis in 1945.

Concerning Muslims, a major problem was that some courts did not consider the Muslim applicants as a ‘religious community’ in the legal sense. This was due to an understanding of a religious community as having a structure similar to Christian faiths. Thus, Muslims who historically have not set up such comparable structures were refused the license to exercise obvious religious rights for such a superficial reason. The Constitutional Court therefore held that a group of persons with common beliefs organized in forms whatsoever fulfils the prerequisites of the law.

### 1.2.5 Religious Education in Public Schools

Islamic religious education is a key issue for the future of Muslims in Germany. Religious education in public schools is guaranteed according to Article 7 Sections 1–3 of the German Constitution. Accordingly, both the teachers and the costs related to teaching and teaching materials are to be paid for by the federal states (Rohe 2008, 59-60). This issue is largely solved for Muslim students of Turkish origin, where various Turkish mother-tongue classes have been set up in cooperation with the Turkish government, who provides the curricula and the teachers. Religious education is part of such classes.

For broader Muslim communities the issue has proven to be more controversial. On the one hand, the German political establishment wants to monitor the process in which Islamic religious education is prepared for and delivered to Muslim pupils. On the other hand, Muslim communities generally object to the involvement of German political party representatives and individuals from other faiths in the decision-making process of Islamic religious education. To make matters even more complicated, there is a tremendous level of diversity within the Muslim community itself, which has proven to be a major challenge in effectively managing the process. Particularly, the decisions of which institutions and individuals to invite as the representatives of the Muslim communities, and in turn, which institutions to exclude from the process prove to be very controversial. However, the issue needs to be solved in Germany as it is assigned an immense level of importance by the Muslim communities and the German constitution provides for the right of religious education for everyone.

## 2 Demographic Profile

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Despite the growing importance of Islam and Muslim communities in Germany, there is an insufficient number of academic research as well as statistical information concerning Muslims. However, the situation is quickly changing and an increasing number of studies on Islam and Muslims in Germany are being carried out. In the following section, a selective review of the existing secondary sources concerning the profile of Muslim communities in Germany is presented.

### 2.1 Demographic Profile and Ethnic/National Composition

As stated in the previous section, there is no consensus on the exact figure concerning the size of the Muslim community in Germany. The estimates are provided as low as 2.1 million (BBC, 2013) and as high as 5 million (Stichs, 2016). Since the most recent BAMF publication puts the estimate at 4.7 million in 2015, and a significant number of Syrians, pronounced in the hundreds of thousands if not a million, were added to this in recent years, it appears safe to argue that the real number of Muslims in Germany is well above 5 million. This number corresponds to approximately 6% of total German population.

Quite clearly, a large majority of the Muslims in Germany are of Turkish origin. Again, while there is a degree of variation amongst the estimates, most converge around the figure of 62-65% (Rohe, 2016: 285). Following the Turkish Muslims, Southeast European, Middle Eastern and North African Muslim communities are the other significant minorities. Below, figures from three different periods are brought together from the BRILL Yearbook of Muslims in Europe publications (see Table 10).

In the 2018 version of the Yearbook of Muslims in Europe, Rohe adjusted his figures and suggested a decreasing yet continuous Turkish dominance with an increasing prominence of Middle-Eastern Muslims, which can largely be attributed to the significant number of Syrian asylum-seekers that arrived in the country since 2015. Specifically, he notes that the proportion of the Turkish community has reduced to 50.6% by 2018 from its 2015 figure of 63.2%. In turn, the share of Middle Eastern Muslims has grown to become 17.1%, suggesting a very significant increase from its previous 8.1% in 2015. The same study, however, cites the total number of Muslims in Germany to be 4.4-4.7 million, same as the 2015 figure cited by the same author. The significantly changed breakdown of the ethnic composition, then, requires an explanation: if the total number of Muslims has not changed, why the Turkish community's share has dramatically shrank and the Middle Eastern Muslims' share more than doubled in a matter of a few years. The statistics to be released by the German state and the next studies on Germany's Muslim population shall hopefully provide an explanation.

**Table 1.** Figures Related to Ethnic/National Composition and Size of Muslim Communities in Germany in 2006, 2009, 2015, and 2018

2006*		2009**		2015***		2018****	
Group	N	Group	N	Group	N / %	Group	N / %
TOTAL MUSLIM	3.1 - 3.4 M	TOTAL MUSLIM	3.8 - 4.3 M	TOTAL MUSLIM	4.4 - 4.7 M	TOTAL MUSLIM	4.4 - 4.7 M
Muslims with German Nationality	1-1.1 M	Muslims with German Nationality	2 M	Muslims with German Nationality	45%	Muslims with German Nationality	45%
Turkish	2.5 M	Turkish	2.5 M	Turkish	63.2%	Turkish	50.6%
Bosnia-Herzegovina	190,000	Former Yugoslavia	500,000	Southeast European	13.6%	Southeast European	11.5%
Iran	130,000	Middle East	300,000	Middle Eastern	8.1%	Middle Eastern	17.1%
Morocco	124,000	North Africa	300,000	North African	6.9%	North African	5.8%
Afghanistan	96,000	Rest of Africa	60,000	South/Southeast Asian	4.6%	South/Southeast Asian	8.2%
Iraq	95,000	South/Southeast Asia	180,000	Iranian	1.7%	Iranian	1.9%
Lebanon	70,000	Iran	70,000	Sub-Saharan Africa	1.5%	Sub-Saharan Africa	2.5%
Pakistan	50,000			Central Asian/CIS	0.4%	Central Asian/CIS	2.4%
Tunisia	44,000						
Syria	43,000						

**Sources:** \* Robbers, BRILL Yearbook of Muslims in Europe, 2009, p.141; \*\* Rohe, BRILL Yearbook of Muslims in Europe, 2010, p. 217; \*\*\* Rohe, BRILL Yearbook of Muslims in Europe, 2016, p.285-286; \*\*\*\* Rohe, BRILL Yearbook of Muslims in Europe, 2018, p. 306

## 2.2 Religious Profile

Among the Muslims in Germany, the majority follow the Sunni sect of Islam, but also significant groups follow the Twelver-shi'is (of Iranian, Lebanese and Iraqi origin) sect which may be at 150,000 persons as well as an estimated 500,000 Alevis, mostly from Turkey, not to forget some 30,000 Ahmadis from Pakistan, the oldest organized Muslim group in Germany. As everywhere in the world, their opinions and beliefs range from very devout to a mere cultural link to Islam: Sufism is widespread, especially among the Turks (Rohe, 2008: 49-50). Using the BRILL Yearbooks, Table 2 contains information related to the size of various Muslim communities in 2006 and 2016.

A more specific breakdown of the largest Muslim community in Germany, i.e. the Turkish immigrants, is provided by Faruk Şen who relies on a study conducted by the Foundation Centre for Studies on Turkey. Accordingly, 93% of the Turkish immigrants are Muslim and of these, 88% are Sunni while 11% are Alevi (Şen, 2008: 38).

In terms of the level of religiousness, it is difficult to speak with any certainty. There are only a few studies on this issue and they depend on the subjective self-evaluation of the respondents. One such study on Turkish Muslims in Germany found that a vast majority of its respondents reported to be either religious (64.6%) or very religious (7%); while those who said that they were “not religious at all” were a small minority (3.3%) (Şen, 2008: 39).

**Table 2.** Sizes of Various Muslim Communities in Germany in 2006 and 2016/2018

2006*			2016** & 2018***	
Groups	N	%	Groups	%
Sunni	2.5 million	73-80	Sunni	74.1
Alevi	400,000-700,000	12-20	Alevi	12.7
Twelver Shi'i	200,000	5.8-6.4	Shi'i	7.1
Ahmadi	40,000	1.1-1.2	Ahmadi	1.7

**Source:** \* Robbers, BRILL Yearbook of Muslims in Europe, 2009, p.141; \*\* Rohe, BRILL Yearbook of Muslims in Europe, 2016, p.286; \*\*\*Rohe, BRILL Yearbook of Muslims in Europe, 2018, p. 306

### 2.3 Socio-Economic Profile

One of the most important indicators of the socio-economic status of a community is education. While exact and recent data on Muslims' educational attainment levels is lacking, some studies suggest that Muslims' educational attainment varies significantly by their generation. Overall, the educational attainment level of Muslims appears to be low, and this is largely because the large bulk of first generation immigrants are poorly educated low-skilled guest workers. With the new generation of Muslims who are born in Germany, the educational level of Muslims is increasing. According to a 2009 official figure, 65.9% of German Muslims had less than a high school degree, while those with a high school degree or higher (i.e. college or a Master's degree, etc.) is 34.1% (cited in Chbib [2010], p. 21).

In terms of the economic indicators, income levels are important to examine. A survey conducted by Pew Institute in 2006 found that Muslims in Germany were less wealthy than the rest of the population. Majority of Muslims (53%) reported annual incomes of less than EUR 18,000 (compared to 35% of the German total population with the same income) while only 12% of Muslims reported annual incomes of higher than EUR 30,000, compared to the 26% of the overall German population (PEW 2007, p.19). The subjective perception of the Muslims in Germany, however, seems to be quite positive. While 37.5% of German Muslims stated that they are satisfied with their financial means and another 42.2% state that their income fairly suffices, only 20.3% reported insufficient household income (Brettfeld and Wetzels 2007, p.89).

Regarding the employment rates, in 2007 43.5% of Muslims in Germany were employed at full-time jobs, while 15.5% were self-employed and 10.8% were employed at part-time jobs (Brettfeld and Wetzels 2007, p.88). These rates might not appear to be very low but it needs to be noted that there is a significant gap between the employment rates of Muslim men and that of Muslim women (Chbib 2010).

## 3 Views on Migration and Integration

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This section presents and discusses the findings on the views of the Muslim community in Germany regarding migration and integration. The presented survey data, instead of providing all the answers given to the questions, uses calculated composite average scores to provide an average measure for the overall responses given by the respondents. To calculate this average, a weighed scoring strategy was used in the following way: the frequency of the weakest category was multiplied by 1; the next category's frequency was multiplied by 2; the medium category, which is the medium point usually denoting 'neither weak, nor strong', is multiplied by 3; with the stronger categories multiplied by 4 and 5 in the same way. Then, the sum was divided by the total number of respondents to give the composite average score.<sup>1</sup> To add a further measure of the responses, the summary tables also include the percentage of the people who gave responses in the strongest two categories.

### 3.1 Experience of Being a Member of the Muslim Community in Germany

In this part, the respondents of the survey were asked two questions. The first one was about the main advantages of being a Muslim in Germany, while the second one was about the perceived main disadvantages. Here, we did not make any clarifications concerning any frame of reference or comparison to the respondents. In a way, the question is designed to collect the perceived positive and negative aspects of life for Muslims in the country. The respondents were informed that they could provide up to three responses to both questions.

#### 3.1.1 Advantages/Benefits of Living in Germany as a Muslim

When we look at the responses by the survey respondents, the two main advantages of living in Germany for Muslims appear to be the welfare state (21%) and the religious and cultural freedom (20%).

As the respondents were asked to provide up to three answers, Table 3 shows the clustered responses. The third frequently suggested response is the education system (16%) which is followed by three responses: economic prosperity (16%), rule of law (13%), and strong democratic system and human rights (13%).

When we look at the reflections of the interviewees and workshop participants, in general, all participants suggested that, considering the constitutional structure in Germany and the far-reaching rights provided for individuals as well as religious communities, Germany offered many advantages.

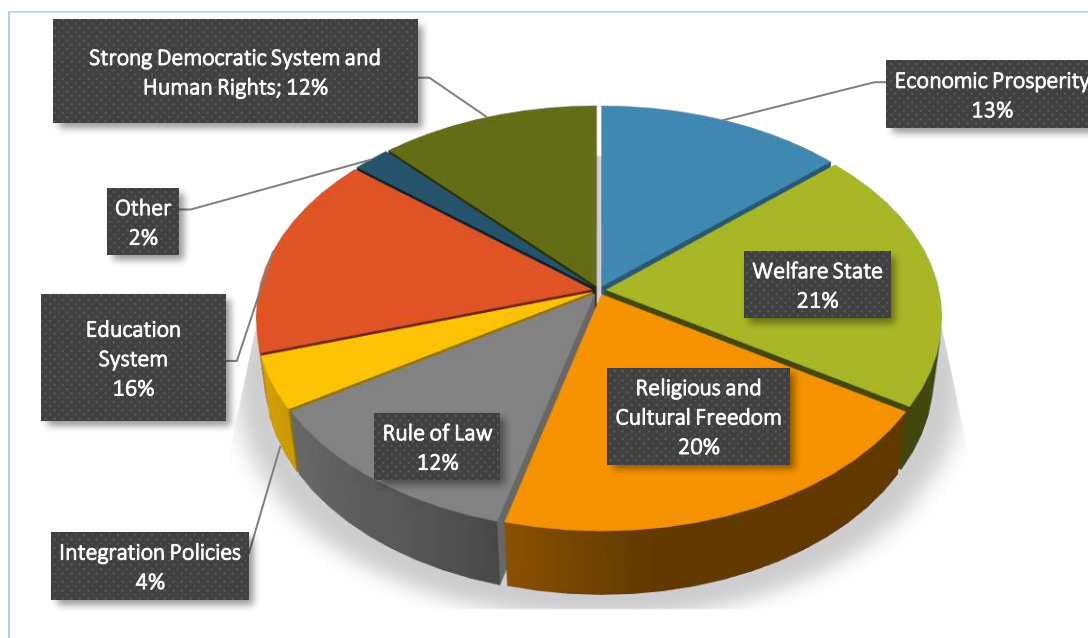
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<sup>1</sup> A detailed description of how the composite scores are calculated is presented in Appendix III.

**Table 3.** Main Advantages of Living in Germany

Main Advantages	N	%
Welfare State	70	21
Religious and Cultural Freedom	69	20
Education System	54	16
Economic Prosperity	46	13
Rule of Law	41	12
Strong Democratic System and Human Rights	41	12
Integration Policies	14	4
Other	7	2
Total	342	100

The issue of religious education was presented as a good example. It was suggested that children from Muslim families were freely receiving religious education at public schools. In the same manner, it was suggested that Islamic organizations could be freely established since the 1970s. The participants claimed that representation of religious identities as well as practicing religion in public spaces were allowed in German as long as they did not disturb the public order or harmed anyone. In comparison to some other European countries, particularly France, this was seen as a very important advantage of living in Germany.

**Figure 1.** What are the Main Advantages of Living in Germany as a Muslim?

In terms of political rights and freedoms, it was repeated that as long as the individuals and community organizations act in accordance with the law, there was no problems experienced by the Muslims. It was also suggested that the establishment of German Islamic Conference made it easier for many Islamic organizations to be able to communicate with the German state. It was also suggested that, in Germany, communities needed to organize and mobilize themselves if they wanted to demand anything, instead of passively waiting for the state provide services. It was mentioned that this was possible and relatively easy in Germany for any organized community.

However, it was proposed that Muslim communities and organizations were not seen to be very successful in benefiting from such rights because of the dividedness in the Muslim community and problems of representation. In many cases, it was suggested, Muslim organizations were not able to act in a decisive manner and, most of the time, ended up being consulted about their opinions. As a result, the extent to which they can exert influence is severely restricted. Related to this point, the issue of legal recognition as a public legal entity (*Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts*) was raised. Until today, apart from the Christian and Jewish communities, the only Muslim community that was recognized as such was the Ahmaddiya Muslim Jamaat, which was given this status in 2013 in Hessen. Considering the fact that Ahmadiyya community is one of the smallest Muslim communities and the other major communities have been demanding the same status, this issue keeps coming up as a negative fact about Germany.

In terms of cultural rights and freedoms, the participants emphasized a distinction that is made in Germany between culture and religion. Therefore, those activities related to Islam are not considered as cultural events, but religious ones. It was suggested that while Turkish or Persian cultures were valued greatly, they were considered in relation to such things as traditional cuisine or historical literary products, and not Islam. Some participants suggested that the most important demand of the Germans from Muslims was integration and they were defining this process in terms of cultural adaptation, which was wrong. They complained that some Germans were expecting Muslims to suddenly change and forget about their cultural differences and sensitivities, as if touched by a magic wand. On the other hands, it was suggested that Muslims need to be more open-minded about certain issues concerning the majority Germans and this would enhance their freedom.

### 3.1.2 Disadvantages/Challenges of Living in Germany as a Muslim

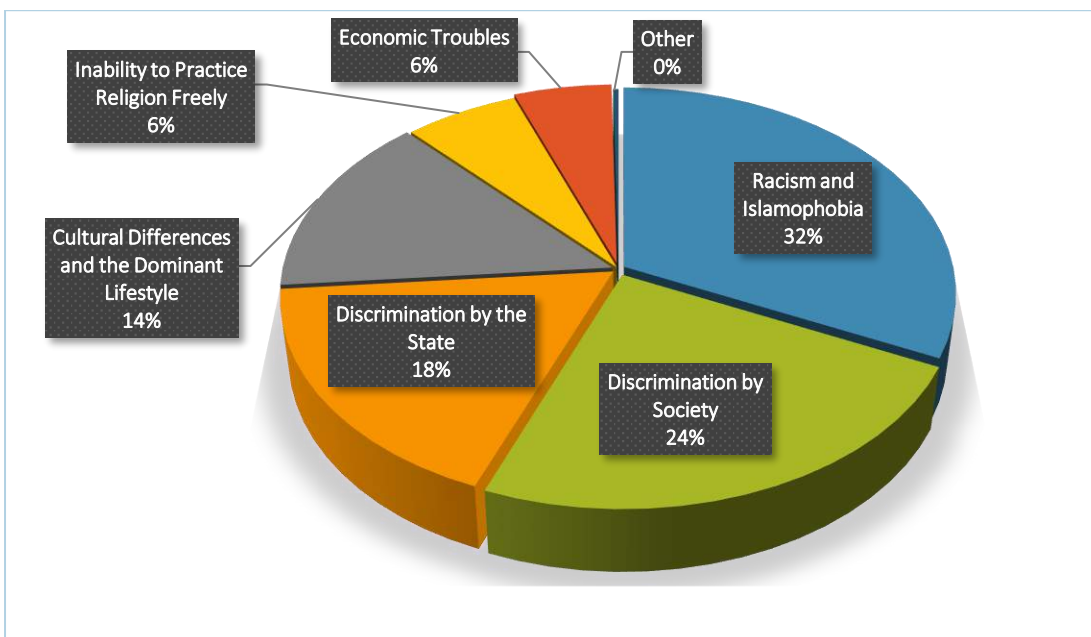
When we look at the responses given to the second question in the Berlin survey, i.e. 'what are the main disadvantages of living in Germany for a Muslim?', we see that 'racism and Islamophobia' is at the top of the list. Again, since respondents were allowed to give multiple answers, their responses are clustered together. All three top answers concern discrimination and, as the following discussion based on the input by the interviews and workshops will show, Germany appears to have a lot to improve in this regard (see Table 4 and Figure 2).



**Table 4.** Main Disadvantages of Living in Germany as a Muslim

Main Disadvantages	N	%
Racism and Islamophobia	107	32
Discrimination by Society	80	24
Discrimination by the State	59	18
Cultural Differences and the Dominant Lifestyle	48	14
Inability to Practice Religion Freely	21	6
Economic Troubles	18	6
Other	1	0
Total	342	100

When we look at the interviews and the workshop discussions, the participants highlighted the experience that, although on paper there were not any significant problems due to the legal regulations and guarantees, there were some problems in practice.

**Figure 2.** What are the Main Disadvantages of Living in Germany as a Muslim?

Most significantly, the job market was suggested as one of the arenas where Muslims experience certain problems in practice. Some participants suggested that the ‘unwritten rules’ and ‘invisible barriers’ of the job market leave Muslims in a disadvantaged position. One participant, quoting a research report, suggested that those individuals with a German name who applied for the same apprenticeship program were multiple times more likely to be accepted compared to those with

'foreign' names or those who wear a headscarf. Another participant suggested that Muslim individuals had to make significantly more job applications before they can find a job and some female applicants had to remove their headscarves before being accepted to a job. In support of this argument, one of the female participants who work as a teacher at a public school said that she had to remove her headscarf before going to school every day and had to put it back on at the end of the day. Another participant said that she was able to work with her headscarf at a public institution thanks to her supervisor's attitude but she is aware of the fact if she had to work at another public organization, she would have to remove her headscarf. In addition, these female participants suggested that they were in a further disadvantaged position because of being visibly Muslim, having a foreign name, and being a woman. They also claimed that wearing a headscarf was often taken to mean that the person is more religious therefore creating another disadvantage.

Another suggested challenge was the representation of Islam and Muslims by the media. There were two major complaints. First, it was suggested that the TV programs in which Muslims were discussed hardly involved any Muslim voice. In other words, Islam was debated on TV without any Muslims. Secondly, and more importantly, the participants reported that representation of Islam and Muslims in the media usually takes place in relation to negative issues such as extremism and terror. Therefore, it was claimed that an association between Islam and such negative concepts were established and enforced through the media. While Muslims were portrayed as failed people, if not terrorists, those successful Muslims who make significant contributions to science, art, or economy of Germany were very rarely shown in the media.

According to participants, another challenge was the perception that all the efforts made by Muslims were not adequately appreciated or acknowledged by the mainstream German society. The participants stated the desire of the Muslims to be socially accepted as full and normal members of society without being regarded as foreigners because of their ethnic or religious identities. They suggested that it was overwhelming to be required to prove that they belong to this society and convince others about the sincerity of their belonging repeatedly while constantly being dragged into discussions about the distinctiveness of Islam and failure of Muslims integration.

### 3.2 Sense of Belonging

Next, we wanted to collect information on another crucial concept, which is 'sense of belonging', that enjoyed a sky-rocketing significance and popularity in the context of the identity politics, particularly in relation to transnational ties of diasporic communities and integration processes of immigrants. Instead of trying to come up with a measure that would supposedly measure sense of belonging in an 'objective' way, we preferred to obtain the subjective reflections of the respondents, considering the subjective and politicized nature of the concept. Therefore, we asked the participants to place their sense of belonging to different items on a 5-point scale, 1 indicating 'weakest' and 5 indicating 'strongest' sense of belonging (Table 5).

The respondents reported the strongest sense of belonging to their countries of origin. This finding needs to be considered in the context of a heated political debate in Germany concerning transnational loyalties, particularly in relation to the largest ethnic and religious minority, i.e. the Turkish community. It needs to be added that at the time of the survey, Turkey and Germany were in the midst of a significant crisis in their bilateral relations. A vast 73% of the respondents said that their sense of belonging to their country of origin was either strong (43.4%) or strongest (29.6%). In the second rank, we see that sense of belonging to Islam is quite strong. It received an average score 3.8. In addition, two-thirds of all participants reported that their sense of belonging to Islam was either strong (29.6%) or strongest (36.8%).

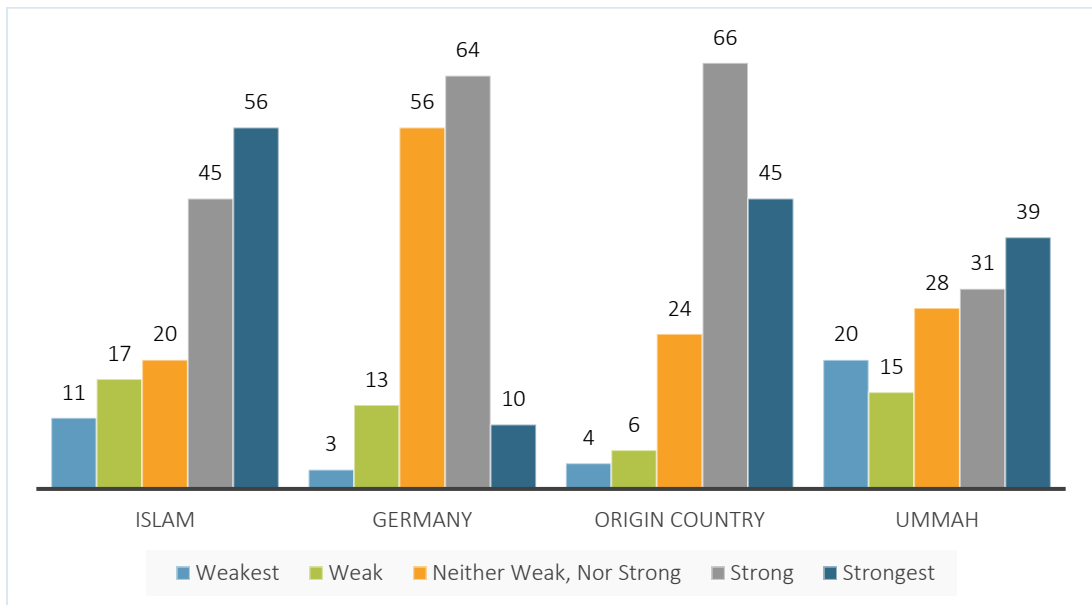
**Table 5.** How Strong A Sense of Belonging Do You Feel to Following?

	Average Score (/5)	Strong + Strongest (%)
Islam	3.8	66.4
Germany	3.4	48.7
Country of Origin	4.0	73.0
Europe	3.0	27.0
Ummah	3.4	46.1
Your Ethnic Group	3.6	55.3

The respondents in Berlin also reported a strong sense of belonging to Germany, even though they display a very strong level of sense of belonging to their country of origin, to their religion, and in the third place, their ethnicity with a high score of 3.6. This shows that for the Muslim respondents of the Berlin survey, sense of belonging to their religion, country of origin or their ethnic community does not pose as a conflict for feeling a belonging to Germany at the same time.

The distribution of answers is presented in Figure 3.

**Figure 3.** Sense of Belonging of Muslims in Berlin Survey



### 3.3 Discrimination and Violation of Rights

An issue of much discussion by Muslims in Berlin was discrimination and the violation of rights (see Figure 2). The German context appears to present a complicated and turbulent case *vis-à-vis* the violation of rights and the level of discrimination experienced by Muslim communities. According to the findings of the GMD Berlin Survey, when asked to name three disadvantages of living in Germany, more than 35% of the participants listed “discrimination by the state” as a main disadvantage, while more than 50% listed “discrimination by the society” either as the first or as the second disadvantage (25.8% and 27.2%, respectively).

According to *Angela*, a lawyer who works with immigrant groups and Muslims, when compared to France and Britain, in terms of the mix and diverse motives, historical and political frames, Germany has a smaller and less diverse Muslim and migrant community. However, racism remains more prominent. In fact, compared to other European countries, racism and discrimination, according to *Angela*, is institutionalized at a higher level in Germany. *Angela* presented the Neutralization Act of Berlin, as one such example. According to *Angela*, this Act, which prevents any display of religious symbols, including the headscarf, in the workplace and public institutions has a sexist and racist implication and ramification. *Angela* continued as follows: “By, allegedly, preventing students from seeing a Muslim teacher in a headscarf, it is believed that students are saved from unwelcome and undesirable influences, since teachers are considered as potential role models. However, this protective act creates another victim, sets another boundary, promotes and endorses another prejudice: that a woman in a headscarf is suppressed and therefore is a bad influence. This law also encourages co-workers to discriminate against their veiled colleague. One should ask, what happened to those feminist arguments, which were emphasizing the need to protect democratic and liberal culture, freedoms and rights?”

Many respondents in Berlin, both participants of the Berlin Workshop and those interviewed, *Hamza* and *Angela*, maintained that the general argument about the so-called failure of integration is only a blame-shifting strategy and manipulative political tactic. A participant of the Workshop, a German teacher of Turkish origin required to take off her headscarf before entering the school, addressed this issue with the following words:

“If you constantly and systematically discriminate against minority groups, just because they have distinct cultures, different religions; if you deny them housing in the central areas; if you deny them a quality education for their children; if you do not employ them just because of their headscarves; if you not treat them on an equal footing with the natives, how could you expect them to integrate.”

Making similar points, many respondents agreed that discrimination, if nothing else, is simply counterproductive if the goal is effective and successful integration. Integration, in such a context, quickly turns into a euphemism for assimilation.

Another interviewee from Berlin, a spokesperson for an umbrella Muslim NGO, stated that the German authorities and certain sections of society, when it comes to the question of integration, would demand Muslims to speak the language and to know the system. According to this interviewee, this demand is

somewhat irrational and axiomatic in nature since the majority of the Muslim community speaks the language and knows the system very well. “Most of them were born here, German is their native language. They are raised in this system, in fact, they lived in this system for their entire lives,” *Hamza* reported. For him, the German society and authorities are simply reluctant to accept these Muslim individuals as German, as natives, and as a part of German society. For them these Muslim individuals have German citizenship. In the best case, they are almost German, but not quite. When asked “what are the main criteria for being German in the eyes of the authorities and the society?”, the interviewee responded as follows: “If you ask them, although without putting it straightforwardly and explicitly, they would tell you that only if someone is born German, he/she could be a German.” Many respondents shared similar views, stating that their demands, concerns, and problems are never treated on an equal footing with those of native Germans.<sup>2</sup>

*Hamza, Rida*, and many participants of the Berlin Workshop reported that in Germany, discrimination is manifest particularly when a member of the Muslim community applies for a job. Several studies and social experiments indicate that a person with a Muslim name or a Muslim-sounding surname on his/her resume is eight times less likely to be hired/or get a position. Being identified as Muslim, in the majority of cases, leads to dramatically fewer job opportunities for an applicant. *Hamza* stated: “Even if you were born here, and are a native speaker of the language, have the citizenship, and have been here for your entire life, with a Muslim-sounding name on your resume, you are eight times less likely to be employed.”

In the opinion of many Muslim respondents in Berlin, one of the main demands of the Muslim communities from both the society and the states is acceptance, *viz.*, being accepted and recognized as a constitutive part of Germany, not mere citizens of German states. According to *Hamza*, since the 1970s, Germany has been a country where Muslim children are born every day. However, the German authorities and society, for decades, had circumnavigated the issues and questions regarding Muslim and immigrant communities, and some of the problems that Muslims and immigrants are struggling with today are caused by this long-standing negligence. The politics of procrastination has now been dropped, yet, an absolute acceptance, as well as recognition, by society and states is yet to be achieved.

Contesting this generic argument, a German policy-maker and expert on Muslim communities in a prominent think-tank, *Hans*, stated that acceptance is a very vague term. “People say ‘the state should accept Islam.’ Well, the state does not accept any religion in Germany. This is a concept, being accepted, that does not match with the German legal system. The state is not in the position to accept Islam. Not even recognition works, as a concept, because the state is explicitly not allowed to recognize any religion. [...] It contradicts with the constitutional understanding in Germany. What we need is more professionalism and more sensitivity and mutual communication, instead of fighting against the established legal political structure and the system. But there is acceptance in the social and political level and the focus should be on that. Muslim communities, too, should work on that.” According to *Hans*, in order to achieve that social and political acceptance, the Muslim communities, should

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<sup>2</sup> *Rot* gave the following case as example to this: “When a Turkish or Arabic-origin individual applies to the courses designed for integration to get to know the system, learn the language and culture, they are charged. But when a German-origin individual from Russia applies, it is all free.”

denounce the representative bodies that mostly act like political lobbies, present an “outdated diaspora Islam,” and resist to really establishing an Islamic life in Germany.

To sum up, discrimination and the violation of rights, as one of the most voiced issues of the Muslim communities seems to be a serious and pressing problem in Germany. As a participant of the Berlin Workshop, a representative of a Muslim youth organisation put it: “The lack of true equality and invisible yet systematic discrimination frames the German context *vis-à-vis* the Muslim communities. Of course there is equality, all German citizens are equal, but some of them are more equal than others.” Essentially, even if there is no problem of inequality from the legal framework, Muslims face certain difficulties in practice. Legislations and legislative processes can be mitigated or complicated by the practice.

### 3.4 Opinions of the Muslim Communities in Berlin

In this section, the respondents were asked to express their opinions on a wide variety of issues. They were presented with various statements reflecting certain opinions, sometimes in a deliberately provocative way, and asked to respond on a 5-point Likert scale from ‘1-totally disagree’ to ‘5-totally agree’ (Table 6).

**Table 6.** To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Average Score (/5)	Agree + Totally Agree (%)
The success of the Islam depends on the unity of all <i>Ummah</i>	3.6	27.4
There is no contradiction/disagreement between the Muslim identity and the German identity for a young Muslim	4.2	82.3
It is not possible for an immigrant to both integrate in Germany and sustain relations with the country of origin	3.6	61.1
OIC represents the rights of the Muslims better than other governmental and non-governmental actors	2.4	2.6
OIC must assume a more active role to achieve Muslim unity	3.4	26.3
There are more religious rights for a Muslim in the Germany than my home country	2.4	20.4

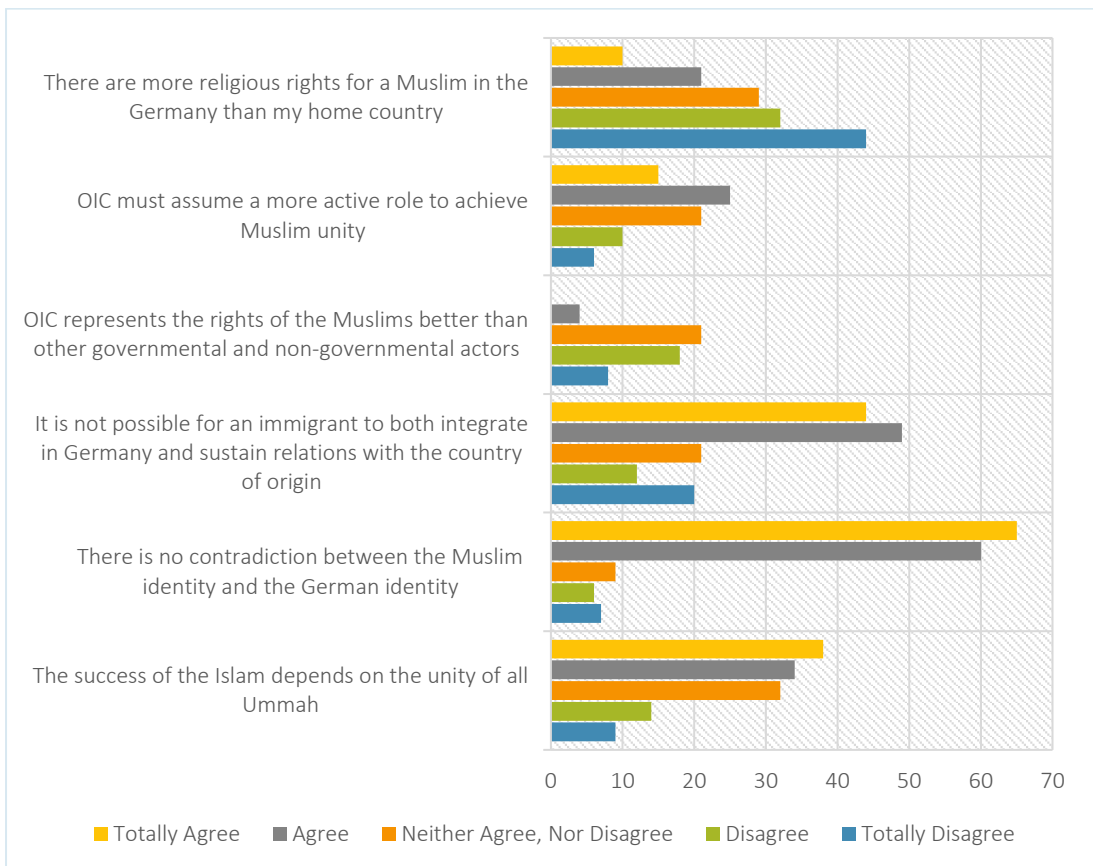
The most striking finding here is that while the strongest level of agreement is reported to the statement “There is no contradiction/disagreement between the Muslim identity and the German identity for a young Muslim”; the respondents also overwhelmingly agreed with the statement that “It is not possible for an immigrant to both integrate in Germany and sustain relations with the country of origin”. In other words, while 82.3% of the respondents suggested that, the Muslim identity and the German identity were perfectly compatible; a large majority, 61.1% reported that they believed that for an immigrant to integrate in Germany, he/she should not sustain relations with the country of origin. These responses seem to suggest that Muslims in Germany consider the links with the origin country, and arguably the national identity, as a potential barrier in front of integration. Islamic faith

and the Muslim identity, to the contrary, are not considered to pose a threat for integration in the German context.

The lowest level of agreement was with the statement “OIC represents the rights of the Muslims better than other governmental and non-governmental actors”. When combined with the more than average agreement with the statement “OIC must assume a more active role to achieve Muslim unity”, it can be argued that the Muslims in Germany are not satisfied with the level of representation that OIC offers for them and expect the OIC to take a more active stance for achieving Muslim unity.

One last observation concerns the last statement. The Muslims in Germany appear to be concerned with the level of religious rights and freedoms that they have in the country. This finding was apparent from the question of perceived disadvantages of living in Germany for Muslims, which included discrimination and Islamophobia. Here again, a large majority of respondents refuse the argument that Germany gives more religious rights to them as Muslims than their respective countries of origin. The full distribution of answers is presented in Figure 4.

**Figure 4.** To What Extent Do You Agree With the Following Statements?



### 3.5 Trust in Institutions among Muslims

The issue of trust in various institutions is very important for diasporic communities. Therefore, we asked the respondents to subjectively evaluate how much they trust each institution, or set of institutions such as in the case of the legal system, on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 indicating 'very weak trust' to 5 indicating 'very strong trust'. The responses are summarized in the table below (Table 7).

**Table 7.** How would you describe your level of trust to the following?

	Average Score (/5)	Strong + Very Strong (%)
Host Country Government	2.79	15.2
European Union	2.45	9.2
Muslim Leaders in the Host Country	2.56	9.3
Muslim Country Leaders	2.45	13.9
OIC	2.50	6.7
UN	2.28	6.7
Muslim NGOs in the Host Country	2.83	19.8
Host Country Media	1.99	4.6
Host Country Police Force	2.78	18.5
Host Country Legal System	3.23	40.4

The most striking finding from this question is the obvious lack of trust amongst the Muslims in Germany across the board- with the only exception of the German legal system. Consistent with the finding that Muslims in Germany value the rule of law, the strong democratic system and human rights in Germany as a major advantage of living in this country, host country legal system is the only item in this list that returned an above average trust from the respondents. Specifically, more than 40% of the respondents reported either strong or very strong trust in German legal system (Figure 5).

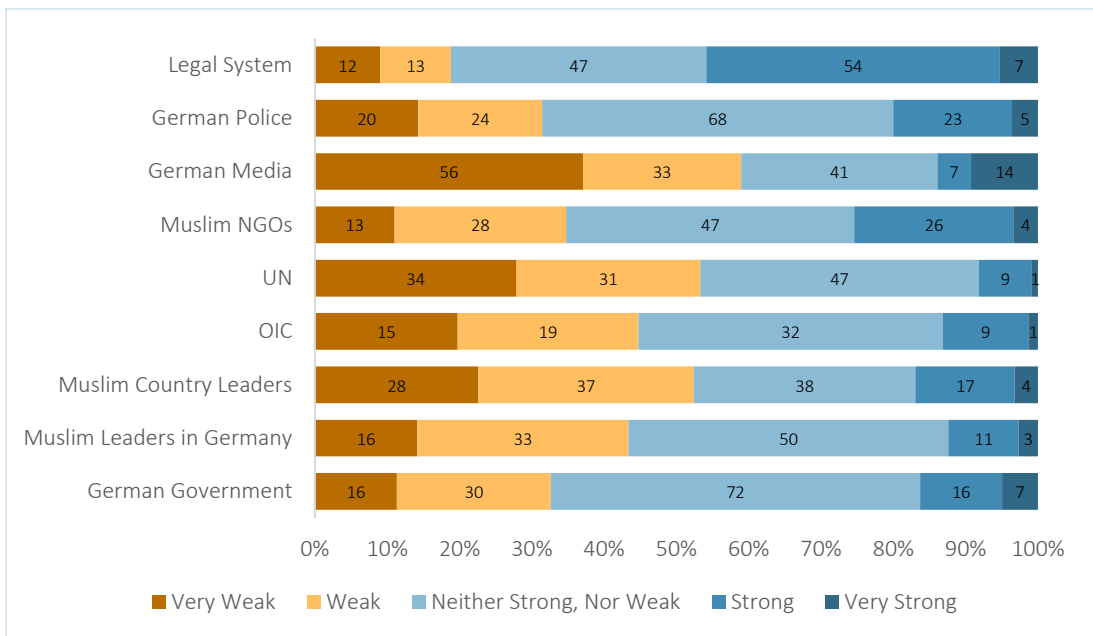
A high level of confidence in the legal system is obviously very positive for a minority community. However, the responses given to the other items on the list call for serious attention. The actors, who implement the rules in this highly trusted system, the government and the police force particularly, appear to be significantly less trusted. In each case, the overall score of trust is beyond average, 2.79 and 2.78, respectively, with only around one-sixth of the respondents reporting strong or very strong trust. Considering the little overall level of trust across the board, these figures are not among the lowest and they are quite close to the average score of 3. However, there seems to be significant room for improvement for better integration of Muslims in Germany.

At the absolute bottom of the barrel is the reported very low level of trust in the German media. Only 4.6% of the respondents suggested that they strongly or very strongly trust the German media. This point is revisited below in the section on representation and visibility of Muslims.



The Muslim leaders, both within the German Muslim community and abroad in Muslim countries, do not appear to be trusted, either. This is consistent with the low level of trust reported to the Muslim NGOs within Germany. This finding needs to be considered by these leaders and institutions, who need to more effectively reach out to Muslims in Germany to be more influential. The same lack of trust appears to be voiced regarding international organizations. Specifically, the UN and the OIC, the two largest international organizations, as well as the EU, appear to command a below average level of trust. It needs to be stressed here, however, that almost half of the survey respondents did not produce an answer for OIC, most probably due to the lack of information about the OIC. Nevertheless, OIC's score was still higher than that of the UN and the EU, so it shows that the OIC needs to promote itself further in Germany (Figure 5).

**Figure 5.** How would you describe your level of trust to the following?



## 4 Perceptions on Socio-Economic Status

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Another important dimension in evaluating the Muslim communities in Germany is their socio-economic status. The Berlin Survey also included questions on the socio-economic profile of Muslims in Germany. It would be useful to start with the socio-economic profile of the Survey respondents themselves.

### 4.1 Socio-Economic Profile of the Survey Sample

The survey in Berlin was conducted with a sample that appears to represent the Muslims in Germany in terms of their socioeconomic profile. Concerning the income of the respondents, we asked two questions: firstly, we asked in objective terms how much money their household was earning every month in Euros. Then, we asked the respondents to evaluate subjectively their perceived wealth level on a scale from very poor to very wealthy.

Around 38% of the respondents in Berlin suggested they were earning less than €2,000 a month, while 44% of the respondents reported themselves to be in the next category making between €2,000 and €3,500 a month. The share of those reporting an earning more than this was around 6% and slightly more than 10% of the respondents refused to give an answer. Almost half of the respondents in Berlin perceive themselves to be in 'lower middle income' category. While a small 2% of the respondents are considering themselves 'very poor', another 7% think that they are in the 'poor' income category. In addition, about one quarter of the respondents in Berlin believe that they are in the 'upper middle income' group, while around 10% perceive themselves to be 'wealthy'.

The subjective evaluations of the respondents can be contextualized when we look at the GNI per capita data of Germany provided by the World Bank. Accordingly, the annual GNI share of German individual is €35,659<sup>3</sup>. Based on this, the evaluation of the respondents also appears to be largely realistic.

### 4.2 Educational Issues

One of the most pronounced issues of the Muslim communities in Germany concerned educational challenges. These could be pinpointed in two headlines: First, the underachievement of students from certain Muslim communities and the unsatisfactory level of Muslim visibility in higher education—an issue particularly voiced in the workshop and interviews conducted in Berlin, although this was not

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<sup>3</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/country/Germany>

exclusive to the German context. Second, the immense influence of socio-economic and cultural factors on educational achievement in Germany.

The first point was expressed during the Berlin fieldwork by many of those who were interviewed, partly because the number of instructors and academicians that participated in the workshop or were interviewed somewhat higher and partly because the German educational system is particularly noted for its difference from other countries and its complexity. When compared with Germany, in terms of the educational rights and freedoms that students, instructors, personnel, and institutions of the Muslim communities enjoy, the UK stands as an exceptionally advantageous and favourable example. Islamic schools are dispersed all around the country and Muslim students and teachers are both benefiting from the freedom of attire in schools whereas in Germany the display of any religious symbols, including the headscarf, is banned for instructors.

One of the most voiced and raised issues, *vis-à-vis* education and the Muslim communities, was the great impact of socio-economic and cultural factors on the quality of education, which, in the case of Muslim students, becomes even more noticeable. Although the educational system seems to be open to everyone and higher education is free in Germany, a fact that is often under-emphasised—which paradoxically enough has been demonstrated in various studies—is that the influence of socio-economic capital and resources on the quality of education a student receives is immense. That is to say, if a family has not accumulated enough socio-economic, cultural, and educational capital and resources, the chances of receiving quality education and attending a good university and thriving academically is significantly low. This selective and educational structure does not favour students with an immigrant background and parents with limited socio-economic, educational, and linguistic resources.

According to an interviewee with an academic background, *Rida*, the notable absence of students with a Muslim and/or immigrant background in higher education in Germany is partly due to this structure.<sup>4</sup> Much the same as all kinds of capital, educational capital is passed from one generation to another, which ultimately results in maintaining people in the same socio-economic class as their parents before them. According to many educators and academics that took part in the workshops and interviews conducted in Berlin, this socio-economic and cultural reproduction of inequality confines Muslim individuals to “inherited social stratifications” and statuses. Individual desires, ambitions, potentials, prospects, capacities, and abilities is hindered, silenced, and lost in such a system of social stratification.

It should be noted, however, that many respondents rightly pointed out that these obstacles were faced by children of socio-economically disadvantaged families of all religions, faiths, and cultures and was particularly a problem faced by migrant and minority groups. “Low-achieving students, true, are coming mostly from immigrant and/or Muslim backgrounds because lower socio-economic status and

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<sup>4</sup> An important initiative was recently implemented by the German authorities to address the under-achievement of Muslim and immigrant students, and the German government is starting a scholarship program, the “Avicenna Studienwerk,” for funding the studies of successful Muslim students at the university level. The main criteria for application for this program is obtaining general qualification for university entrance (*viz.*, Abitur) in Germany and being Muslim. The state will support the Avicenna Studienwerk with a generously high budget until 2020.

position is simply more prevalent among these groups,” stated one of the participants, *Rida*. She goes on to argue that as many studies have shown, a native German with the same low-level of socio-economic resources is likely to suffer from the same systematic problem. “Put differently, although the system is not completely blind to ethnic, religious, national, and gender differences, socio-economic factors ultimately determine all. In this vein, the children of immigrant families are exposed to a chronic double-discrimination that reproduces itself every generation, and are more vulnerable to the negative impacts and ramifications of the system.”

It is important to note that, numerous participants and interviewees stressed that education is the key to many problems the Muslim communities are struggling with today. Therefore, with the increase in the educational attainment and quality of the education that Muslim students achieve some of the major problems, even the diversity dilemma and the conflict over representation, will become either less visible or redundant, altogether. According to those who attributed such a mission to education, the fragmented nature and structure of the Muslim communities, as well as the lack of communal interaction between them is a direct outcome of the low-level of education.

*Musa* argued that Muslim communities of the different ethnic, national, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds have very limited knowledge about one another, and this poses a great challenge when working together with these groups. Thus, inter-communal and intra-communal relationships and interactions involve tensions, unspoken feelings, prejudices, barriers, and unchallenged assumptions. “The lack of proper knowledge and information about the other is one of the main problems of the Muslim community,” stated *Musa*. *Musa* goes on to say that the low level of education also feeds the fear of change, resulting in further isolation and fragmentation since the fear of change causes communities to turn in on themselves and become less involved with other communities.

Such communities will also marginalize all differences even within their own community and not tolerate individual voices and liberties. *Musa* puts this as follows:

“Another problem, which is connected with this one, is the fear of change which often comes from the lack of understanding and low level of education. A dogmatic education will naturally steer up the fear of change. This education demands absolute loyalty and resemblance. You have to be like us, you have to attire yourself like us; the same cloths, the same beards, etc. Such dogmatic education does not allow individuals to express themselves. There is no place for individual liberty there.”

*Aleeza*, made similar observations in the German context, and argued,

“The increase in the level of education will bring about the improvement of intra-communal relationships and interaction. Perhaps mostly because of the language barrier, the first generations of different Muslim communities were able to interact with neither German society nor other Muslim groups in the country. As the new generations attended schools and became educated and proficient in the German language, members of different ethnic and national groups of the Muslim community started to get into dialogue with both one another

and the natives. Thus, education is not only key to integration but also to intra- and inter-communal communication and interaction.”

According to many respondents, one critical element that has set back the academic success of Muslim students, particularly Turkish ones in Germany, was that their parents are, predominantly, not proficient in the German language and educational system. According to *Rida*, Muslim parents might be both eager and ready to invest in the education of their children, and teachers, too, might be keen and responsive to collaborate with families, but still, there are barriers, gaps, and disconnections in the inter-cultural and social communication.

“With the second, third, and fourth generations, the level of communication and interaction has markedly improved. A recent educational report indicates that in the last five years, students with immigrant and/or Muslim background perform far better when compared to their performance in previous decades.”

## 5 Attitudes on Visibility and Representation of Muslims

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This section discusses the views on the visibility and representation of Muslims in Berlin. It first discusses the findings of the Survey. Then, the findings of the interviews and the workshop are utilized in analysing the perceived lack of unity and representation in Germany. Lastly, the views on and experiences of Islamophobia and discrimination are discussed.

### 5.1 Views on Visibility and Representation

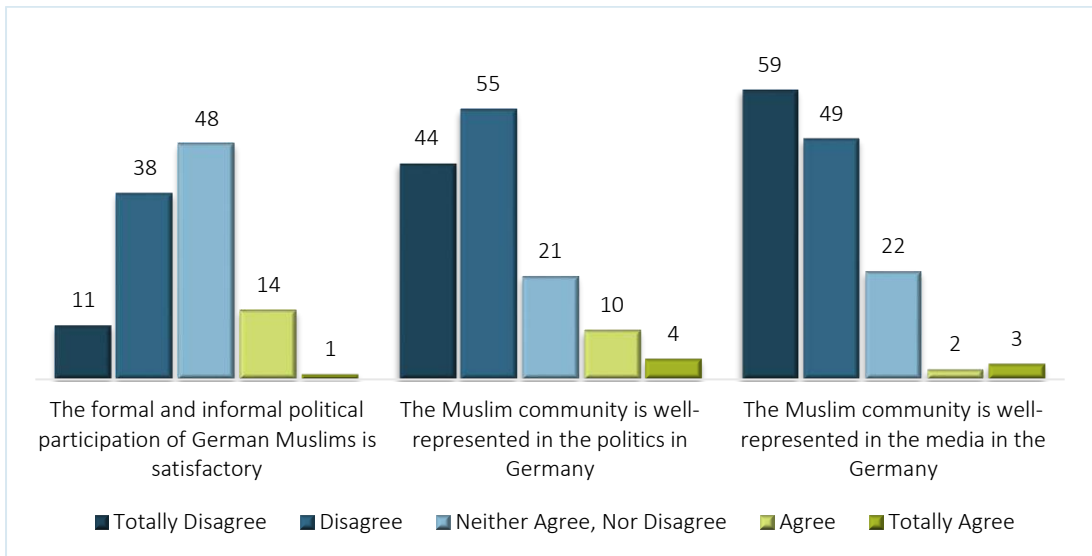
There were several questions in the Survey regarding visibility and representation of Muslims in Germany. Particularly, Muslim's political participation, their representation in German politics, and their representation in German media were inquired. The survey findings confirmed the discussions at the workshop and reflections shared by the interviewees: Muslims in Germany do not feel well represented.

**Table 8.** To What Extent Do you Agree with the Following Statements

	Average Score (/5)	Agree + Totally Agree (%)
The formal and informal political participation of German Muslims is satisfactory	2.6	9.9
The Muslim community is well-represented in the politics in Germany	2.1	9.2
The Muslim community is well-represented in the media in the Germany	1.8	3.3

The most striking finding in this question is the low agreement scores of the 'representation of Muslims' statements. The lowest agreement score is 1.8 to the statement 'the Muslim community is well-represented in the media in Germany'. Only a tiny share of 3.3% of the respondents showed any agreement with this statement. Similarly, the respondents believe that Muslims are not properly represented in the German politics.

A full breakdown of answers is presented in Figure 6.

**Figure 6.** To What Extent Do you Agree with the Following Statements

## 5.2 Lack of Unity and Representation

The question of unity and representation was the most pronounced issue by both the workshop participants and those interviewed in Berlin. In fact, the consensus view that a lack of discernible unity and sense of connection is the biggest challenge facing the Muslim communities in Germany today and could be identified as the only point on which there is no divergence of opinion. All representatives, spokespersons, individuals, leaders, and organizations of the Muslim communities spoken to agreed on and voiced the fact that the over-fragmentation and the lack of intra-communal and inter-communal interaction is the greatest problem of the larger Muslim community across Europe. The surveys reflected similar findings. When asked to identify three major factors causing disunity among Muslims in Germany, more than 50% of the participants in Berlin pointed to either cultural differences or sectarian differences. While around 18% pointed to the lack of leadership, another 15% stated the lack of representation.

According to many respondents, the most salient impact of this lack of unity is the representation of Muslims, which becomes a political crises in of itself and Muslim communities all over Europe suffer from this since in many legal contexts certain rights and freedoms are attainable only when the question of representation is resolved. In Germany, for instance, *Hans*, male German policy-maker and the head of an Islamic Studies Desk at a major German think-tank, because of the legal pretext and constitution, it is difficult to integrate the Muslim communities into the legal system in Germany. According to this legal framework, a religious community needs to meet three criteria in order to be officially ascertained and obtain legal status: a clear membership structure, experience over time, and

provision of religious services. For many years now, German states<sup>5</sup> have struggled with certain religious communities in defining that legal status. *Hans*, the same German policy-maker, explained the difficulty as follows:

Unlike Muslim-majority countries where generally there is one dominant denomination and understanding of Islam, in Germany the situation is extremely diverse and complex. There are various understandings and theologies here. The Ahmaddiya community, for example, since they are well defined and organized, and they match the three criteria, has obtained legal status as a religious community. Part of the problem is that the system, *viz.*, the cooperation by public law, is designed and structured after the church model. And although many Islamic organizations, like The Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (Türkisch-Islamische Union der Anstalt für Religion e.V, in German and Diyanet İşleri Türk İslam Birliği in Turkish, DITIB) could claim that they provide religious services and they care for people, so they do everything that the church does, but their organization and structure does not fit with the cooperative model that is laid by German constitution.

In the workshop conducted in Berlin, many participants stressed the importance of an umbrella organization, which can represent the Muslim communities across Germany. Numerous participants stated that if the Muslim communities, today and in the future, want to express a unified stance and objection against the rising terrorism and inter-communal tensions and defend common democratic values and rights they need to create a joint voice and platform. Five participants stated that if the communities and leaders could put aside sectarian and ideological differences, as well as their egos and power rivalry, and focus on more pressing practical issues and realities this could be achieved. Through this single administrative, representative and leading body, according to these participants, many issues that have been dominating the Muslim agenda for decades, such as the use of a different calendar or the conflict and rivalry, if not hostility, among *ulemas* and different denominational parties can be solved.

Another four, however, strongly objected to this proposal because such an umbrella organization and representative leader will be open to external manipulations and corruption. Furthermore, such a singular and monolithic representative structure is not conducive to the ideals, values and ethos of Islam. It was argued by a participant that Islam is an individualistic religion in essence and thus “a Vatican” is not needed. However fallaciously, this participant was apparently pointing the organizational nature of Catholic Christianity as hierarchical and dependent on a single supreme leader in Vatican. Thus, he was arguing that such a hierarchical organizational body contradicts Islamic ethos since Islam is a religion of equality and not hierarchy.

One of the detrimental effects and outcomes of the super-diversity and the disunity of the Muslim communities is how many policies, initially aimed at addressing the problems of these communities,

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<sup>5</sup> Since religious affairs are dealt with on the federal level by the 16 states in Germany: Baden-Württemberg, Bayern, Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Hessen, Niedersachsen, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Rheinland-Pfalz, Saarland, Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein, Thüringen.



often fail because this overtly fragmented structure is not taken into account. *Sara*, a female Muslim academic with a background in politics, for example stated that

“When developing and presenting a solution for both Muslim community and immigrants, German authorities do not take the very basic truth about these groups, that they are diverse and not a homogenous whole, into account.”

Thus, in many cases, as *Sara* indicated, the efforts and generous budgets that are provided and used to resolve certain issues and improve the lives of Muslims and immigrants, are squandered on solutions, regulations, and initiatives that do not appeal to or attract enough response from these groups. This problem is related to the fact that immigrant and Muslim groups tend to be not invited and encouraged sufficiently to participate in problem solving and decision making processes. Consequently, the very solutions and decisions that are taken to benefit them do not attract their attention, interest, and response. According to numerous respondents in Germany, perhaps because of their super-diverse and over-fragmented situation –in their demands, needs, claims, concerns, and issues– taking such steps and involving them in these processes is impossible. However, the fact does not change: their absence from such processes brings about an absence of reaction. The impact of this is particularly present in the policy development processes.

*Sara* provides a specific example to this in the German context: Take a recent survey on property ownership among Muslim and immigrant (mostly Turkish) people and the natives in Germany. The findings were very surprising: Accordingly, around 45% of immigrants and non-natives own a house. The survey, however, was conducted in German and note that the majority of the first generation immigrants and Muslims (their number among the survey participants was assumedly very high) are not proficient in the German language, and thus most of them probably were talking about their houses back in home country. And the participants were not asked about the location of the house they owned. Buying house is a characteristically cultural pattern in terms of investment. But, without considering these factors and key indicators, the authorities develop policies based on such studies and surveys.

An African-French origin German lawyer, *Angela*, indicated that distinct Muslim groups are not only indifferent towards each other but also hold many prejudices, both conscious and unconscious, against one another. The interviewee argued that there are certain groups that are better terms with one another. “Some inter-group relations, however,” *Angela* reported, “are always charged with extreme tension.” Based upon a number of examples provided by *Angela*, racial, ethnic, gender-based, sectarian, and socio-economic categorizations, fixations, and discrimination is just as prevalent among Muslim communities as in the society at large. A point mentioned by other respondents, also highlighted by *Angela*, was that there is often the presence of implicit racism when non-black Muslims interact with Black Muslims.

When asked about possible solutions to the question of representation, *Angela* stated that the host society and its establishments and organizations should understand and accept that Muslims do not qualify as a single homogenous whole and therefore cannot be represented by a single body. *Angela*

continued that, in fact, the problem is a universal one, it has more or less similar implications, root causes, impacts, and outcomes as in any context: “who represents whom, for what, for what purpose, and why? Who will represent Muslim feminists or Muslim queer identities? Which religious leader, which organization?”

To conclude this section, Muslim communities present an intersectional complexity of diversity composed of different class, social, economic, cultural, historical, educational, denominational, political and ideological backgrounds, stances, values, bonds and affiliations. Once this reality, this foundational and fundamental truth, is accepted the problem of representation and the difficulties caused by it could be properly understood and addressed. If the premises were inaccurate, sanguine, and misleading, then the solution would not work. A multi-variable equation requires complex formulations, techniques, and means and a proper knowledge of variables not generalizations, simplifying deductions, and categorical thinking.

If Muslim identity is viewed as a standard and stable set of other-relevant meanings, rather than a processual and shifting set of self-relevant ones (*viz.*, values, ideals, beliefs, thoughts, fears, and other similar intellectual, psychological, social, ethical, cultural, economic, political, ideological variables), then the question of representation would become problematic than it already is. Because such outlook will negate all subjective, socio-economic, cultural, sectarian, gender-related, political and ideological factors, variables, and determinants, and reduce and confine Muslim identity to the single category of “religious other.” Unfortunately, this outlook is becoming increasingly prevalent. There is not a single way of identifying as a Muslim; there is an infinite variety of ways, as is the case with any religion and faith. Yet, Muslim identity when treated as a single, homogenous and standard whole is not a socio-cultural and religious identity but a mere political category.

### 5.3 Islamophobia, Racism and Negative Representation

Islamophobia and racism was one of the most prominent disadvantages listed in the Germany Survey with more than 60% of the respondents reporting these as a major disadvantage of living in Germany. According to *Aleeza*, an interviewee with a background in politics, the rise of conservative and anti-immigrant politics and the electoral success of populist right-wing parties, as with AFD in Germany, though not exclusive to the German context, are the main issues to focus on. *Aleeza* further stated that the number of attacks on Muslim individuals and organizations, the incidents of Islamophobia and anti-immigrant sentiments, all increased ever since AFD’s electoral success. As this interviewee and many participants of the workshops noted, the members of Muslim community are becoming more and more restrained by the fear and concerns that are caused by these attacks and negative media coverage.

Drawing attention to the over politicization of religion in Germany, *Sara*, stated nowadays, when conversing about religion, people start to talk about politics. “This started with September 11. In the aftermath of the attacks, the interaction between Muslims and German society, state, and institutions started to change.” As many other respondents, both in workshops and interviews pointed out, the lives of Muslims both in Germany as well as in many other contexts changed considerably post-

September 11. The frame and scope of discussions on Islam and the Muslim community, reported by many, became categorically linked with, if not confined to, extremism and terrorism.

Contesting the importance placed on certain generic debates such as the rise of anti-immigrant/Muslim sentiments, right-wing and conservative politics or Islamophobia, *Hans*, argued that “instead we should direct our attention and concentration on real issues: How do we proceed with establishing Muslim theology in universities, how do we organize Islamic instruction classes in public schools, and so forth. These are the issues that matter.”

Still, some further respondents argued that the importance that is attributed to Islamophobia by the Government and state institutions is not convincing. For these respondents, Islamophobia is not related to Islam. It is about the concerns and problems of Western societies *vis-à-vis* their Muslim citizens and communities. Official recognition of Islamophobia in the society might be, in certain contexts and to some extent, mean the protection of Muslim citizens and their rights but in equally many contexts might translate into a legitimate policy for incarcerating Muslim subjectivity in a “protective custody.”

In line with this argument, it is crucial to note that Islamophobia should not become an invisible pronoun for Western Muslim identity and presence. It should not negate its own democratic causes and premises. As in many such contexts we observed, protection is an inherently relational act and concept. It might generate invisible hierarchies and legitimate inequalities. Discussing Islamophobia, in other words, should not lead to framing the Muslim presence in the Western societies with anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiments and reactions.

Such framing will obviously be counterproductive for Muslims. It could reduce the Muslim identity and subjectivity to the “negation” and reactional act of Islamophobia. Islamophobia is not only problematic in the way it affects a Muslim individual but because it reduces Islam and Muslim subjectivity to terrorism, violence, jihadism, oppression, female subjugation, burqa, veil, and the like. These terms compose and frame the critical vocabulary of Islamophobia *vis-à-vis* Islam and Muslims. Thus, the reaction does not only produce injustice or victims but also defines, confines, mandates, and conditions the Muslim identity and subjectivity.

The Muslim presence in Western societies becomes decidedly associated and related to anti-Muslim sentiments and reactions. All reasons, underlying structures, root causes, political and ideological motivations, manipulation, and tactics, socio-economic and historical factors, individual and societal determinants and perspectives are effaced, silenced, and erased by the sweeping imposition of Islamophobia. Treating Islamophobic attacks as unmediated political reactions only serves to reproduce the same binary discourse of clashing civilizations, which can be productive and practical for some power circles that greatly benefit from establishing artificial polarizations, and liquidating fear and terror.

What is needed is a truly emancipatory politics. Such an approach to politics and the protective regime of relations will help tackle the root causes and underlying structures that bring about socio-political symptoms like Islamophobia, xenophobia, and misogyny. As for the negative representation and media

coverage, almost all participants of the Berlin Workshop, agreed that talk shows and discussion programs on TV in which Islam and Muslims are generally represented in a negative way, have a detrimental impact on members of the Muslim communities and their lives. According to many participants, the German media often narrates stories of failed Muslims and portrays the shattered lives of Muslim individuals, and these selective and negative representations feed anti-Muslim sentiments and Islamophobia.

## 6 Confidence in Relations among Muslim Communities

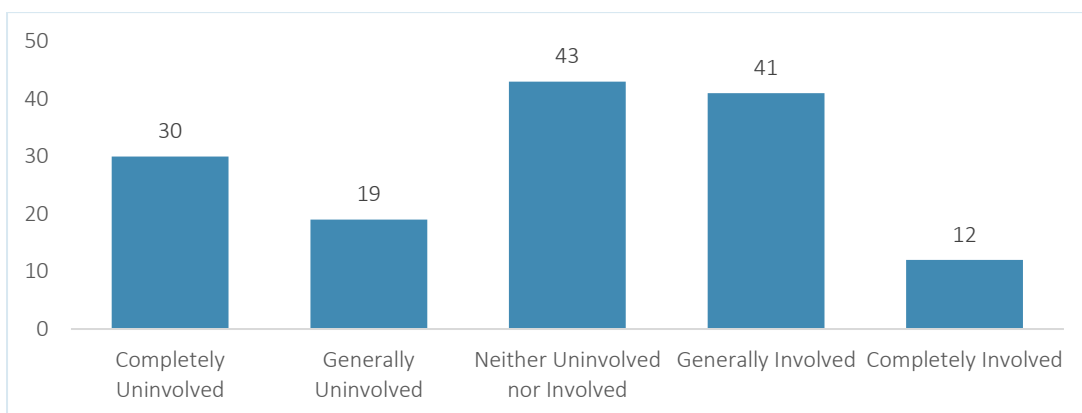
The relations of Muslim Communities amongst themselves and with other communities is another critical dimension of GMD project. In this fashion, this section aims to investigate the intra-Muslim relations and intra-communal relations between Muslims and other communities.

### 6.1 Involvement in the Muslim Community

The survey respondents were asked about how much they were involved with the Muslim communities in Germany. In this part, we firstly asked respondents their own subjective evaluation of how involved they considered themselves to be with the Muslim community, without explaining what we mean by either involvement or Muslim community. On a 5-point scale, from completely uninvolved to completely involved and where there is a mid-point at 'neither involved, nor uninvolved'.

The responses in Berlin suggest a healthy distribution, with a slight tilt towards the left-hand side. In other words, while the respondents who reported to be completely involved corresponds to 8%, at the opposite end, 20% of the respondents consider themselves to be completely uninvolved with the Muslim community. However, the majority of the respondents bulk up in the middle (Figure 7).

**Figure 7.** Level of Involvement with the Muslim Community in Berlin



Following this subjective question, the respondents were asked, also on a 5-point scale, to evaluate the importance of six items for a Muslim. Specifically, they were asked to state in their view, "how much importance does the following have for a Muslim?" The listed items included 'Practice and Rituals', 'Ethical Conduct' (explained a living and acting ethically), 'Social and Cultural Activities',

'Political Activities', 'Life-Style', and 'The Ummah Solidarity' (explained as solidarity with other Muslims). In the following section, the responses are presented using composite average scores.

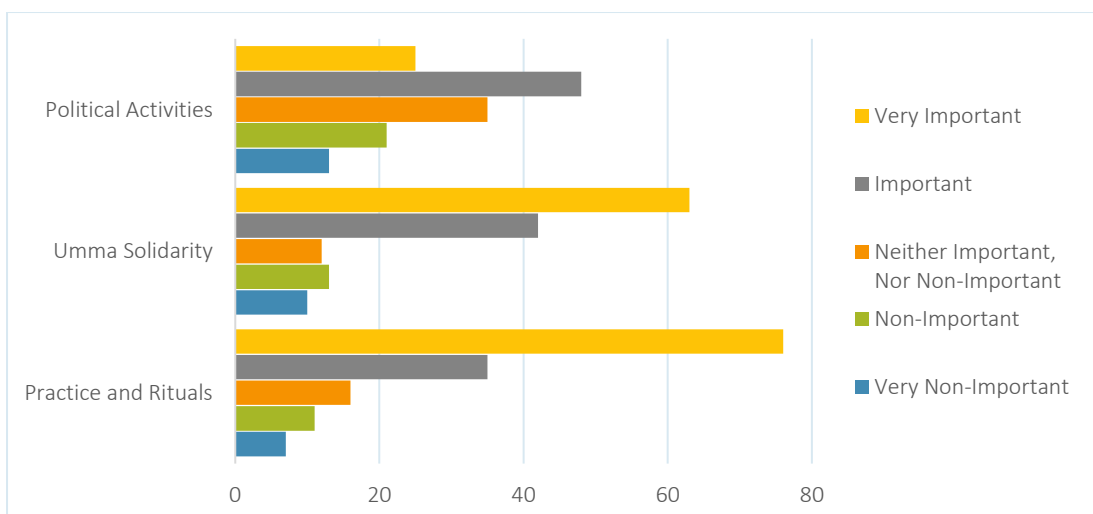
The results are remarkable. First of all, all six items are considered to be important. When the weighted average points are calculated for each item, it can be seen that they are all above 3, which signifies neither important, nor non-important. However, some items appear to be assigned significantly more importance than the others are. The item that was regarded as the most important by the respondents was 'Practice and Rituals', the average point of which was 4.1 out of 5. In other words, to the question "how important are practice and rituals for a Muslim", the respondents gave an overwhelming response. Unlike any other items included in this question, 'Practice and Rituals' are regarded very important by more than half of all respondents (76 said very important, corresponding to 50.3%). In total, 73.5% of all respondents regarded this either very important or important for a Muslim. A close second to 'Practice and Rituals' in assigned importance was 'Ethical Conduct', which had the same average point of 4.1 out of 5. The difference was that, the number of respondents who considered living and acting ethically to be important for a Muslim was greater than those who considered it very important. In total, these two group made up of 71.5% of all respondents. The third item to make it over the average point of 4 was 'Life-Style' (Table 9 & Figure 8).

**Table 9.** How Much Importance do the Following Have for a Muslim?

	Average Score	Very Important + Important (%)
Practice and Rituals	4.1	73.5
Ethical Conduct	4.1	71.5
Social and Cultural Activities	3.9	72.9
Political Activities	3.3	48.4
Life-Style	4.0	69.5
Ummah Solidarity	3.9	69.5

The item that was regarded as the most important by the respondents was 'Practice and Rituals', the average point of which was 4.1 out of 5. In other words, to the question "how important are practice and rituals for a Muslim", the respondents gave an overwhelming response. Unlike any other items included in this question, 'Practice and Rituals' are regarded very important by more than half of all respondents (76 said very important, corresponding to 50.3%). In total, 73.5% of all respondents regarded this either very important or important for a Muslim. A close second to 'Practice and Rituals' in assigned importance was 'Ethical Conduct', which had the same average point of 4.1 out of 5. The difference was that, the number of respondents who considered living and acting ethically to be important for a Muslim was greater than those who considered it very important. In total, these two group made up of 71.5% of all respondents. The third item to make it over the average point of 4 was 'Life-Style' (Table 9 & Figure 8).

**Figure 8.** How Much Importance do the Following Have for a Muslim?



‘Ummah solidarity’ produced a very strong 3.9 average score in Berlin; however, ‘political activities’ produced the lowest average score of importance. This shows that the respondents appear to assign a much lower level of importance to political activities for a Muslim.

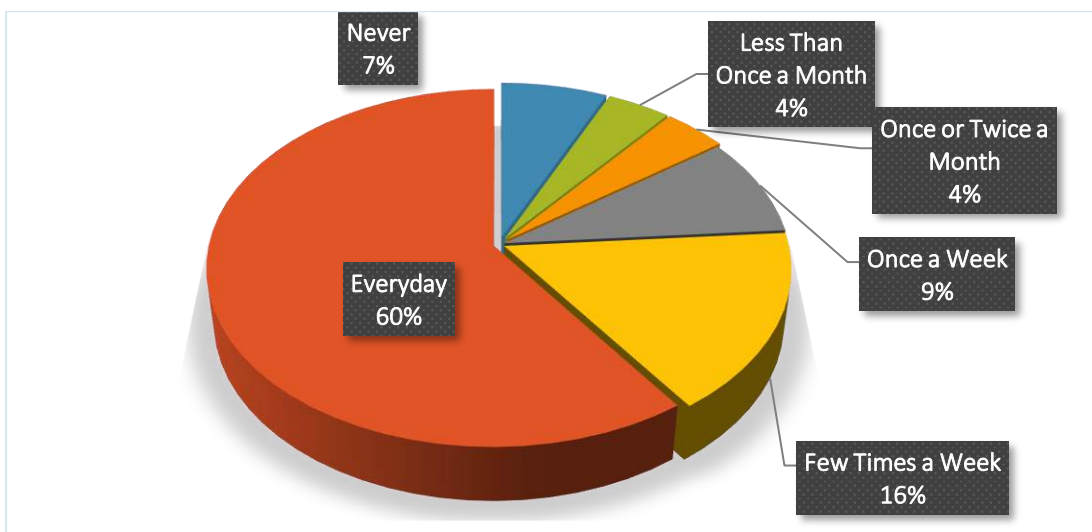
Then, we wanted to learn about the actions of the respondents. To this end, we first asked whether the respondents were a member of any Muslim NGO, such as associations, foundations, cultural centres, or mosque associations. In both contexts, large majorities reported that they were not a member of any NGOs.

Of course, formal membership of an active Muslim NGO is not the only way of active engagement with the Muslim community. Therefore, we asked respondents two questions to see how frequently they were interacting with the other members of the Muslim communities and engaging themselves with the civic life of the Muslim community in their respective host contexts. The first question was designed to see whether, and if so how frequently, the respondents were interacting with members of the Muslim community in Berlin, excluding their family members, relatives and co-workers during time of work.

The responses were striking: a huge 58% of the respondents reported that they were interacting with other members of the Muslim community on a daily basis. To repeat, when we consider these interactions involve people who are not family members, relatives or co-workers that they see obligatorily during work; this figure points to a vibrant and close-knit community (Figure 9).

Secondly, we asked respondents to place themselves on a 5-point scale according to how often they do a list of activities within the Muslim community, with 1 indicating never and 5 indicating all the time (Table 10).

**Figure 9.** How frequently do you interact with members of the Muslim community (excluding your family/relatives and co-workers)?



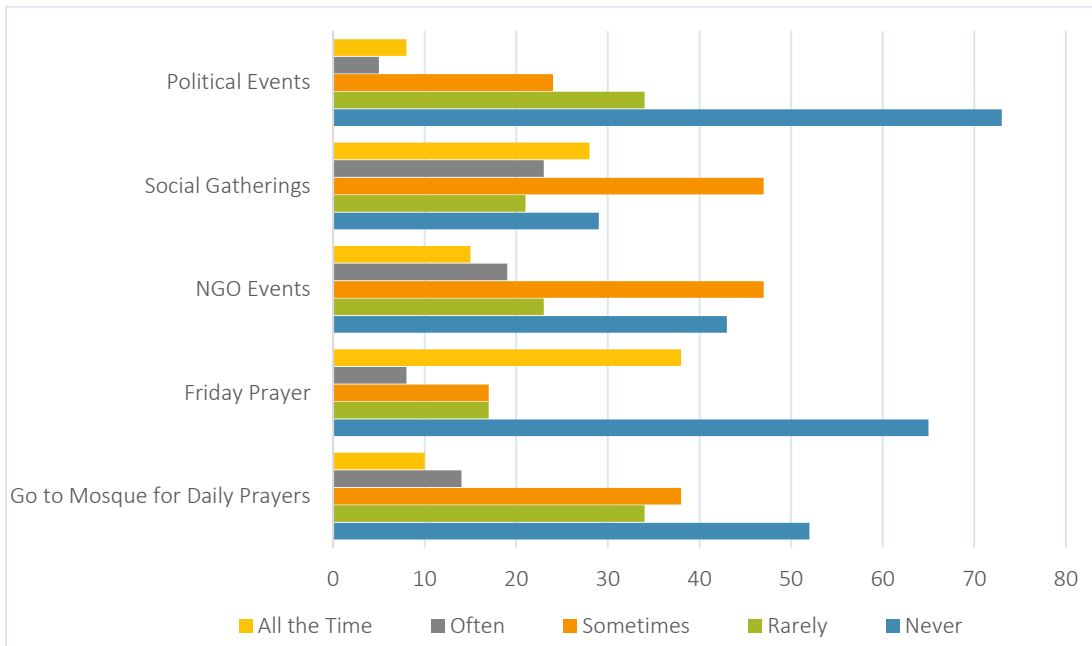
**Table 10.** How often do you do the following activities within the Muslim community?

	Average Score (/5)	Often + All the Time (%)
Go to Mosque for daily prayers	2.3	15.8
Go to Mosque for Friday prayer	2.6	28.3
Attend Muslim NGO activities	2.6	22.4
Attend social gatherings with members of Muslim community (excluding family/relatives)	3.0	33.7
Attend political events with members of Muslim community	1.9	8.6
Attend religious events with members of Muslim community	2.6	19.2
Attend sporting (e.g., football matches, etc.) events with members of Muslim community	2.0	7.9
Attend art-related/cultural events (e.g., Cinema, theatre etc.) with members of Muslim community	2.4	19.2
Attend educational events with members of Muslim community	2.6	24.5
Make financial contributions to Muslim community and NGOs (e.g. donation, charity, fee, fund-raising)	2.5	29.8

As it can be seen in the table, the average frequency with which the participants are doing these activities is rather low. A few items further stand out. It is striking that participants reported the least frequent activity that they do is attend political events with fellow Muslims. The total share of the participants who answered doing this either often or all the time is 8.6% in Berlin (Table 10). The one activity that stands out is attending social gatherings with Muslim individuals other than family members. In fact, one third of all respondents said that they do this either often or all the time.

The finding that attending political activities is the least frequently reported activity is very significant. It shows the distaste of the survey respondents toward the concept of ‘political’. In fact, this finding repeats itself repeatedly in many questions. This includes the above question concerning how much importance the respondents were assigning to various items. The reason why this is the case may be related to the fact that many of the survey respondents, a majority of whom are first generation Muslims, could be feeling less at ease with politics in the diaspora context, particularly if they do not have the host country citizenship. This distaste toward the adjective of ‘political’, on the other hand, was not observed amongst the interviewees and workshop participants. This may add strength to the possibility that when the Muslim individuals are better integrated into the political and legal system, just like the interviewees and workshop participants a vast majority of whom were active NGO members or professionals, they are less antipathetic to politics.



**Figure 10.** How often do you do the following activities within the Muslim community?

## 6.2 Relations of Muslim Communities

The participants were asked how they evaluated the current state of relations between Muslim communities and various other communities. The first set of relations inquired was between the Muslim communities and the host (mainstream German) society. The general sense was that the majority of the participants considered the relations to be on average positive, but not nearly strong or constructive enough. Some participants claimed that there are some channels of communication and dialogue between the communities, but they were not sufficient. While the need for improvement was generally heralded, the majority of the participants suggested that Muslim communities should take more responsibility and take progressive steps.

Secondly, the relations among different Muslim communities were inquired. The general response from the participants was that the relations were, again, generally positive. However, it was mentioned by some participants that there was too much division and unity was desperately needed (see the section 6.3).

When asked about the relations of Muslim communities with their respective countries of origin, the respondents stated that it was a sensitive subject. While for the long-standing communities, whose third and fourth generations were out on the streets, these relations were already quite rare and weak. For some others, the principle was ‘you should not forget, you should not avoid’ (where you came from).

### 6.2.1 Relations of Muslim Communities with the German Society

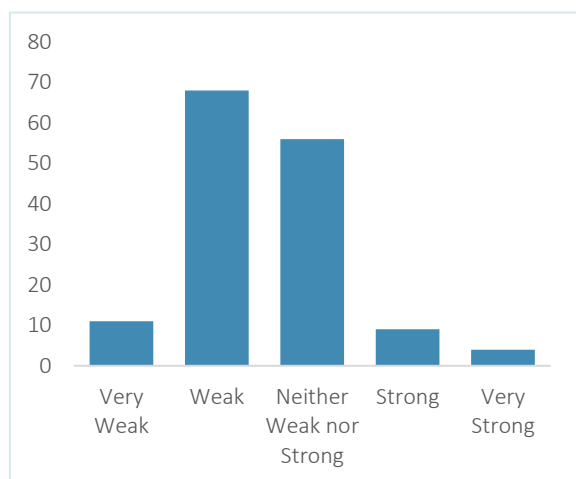
As the first general theme, the participants were asked to assess the relationships between the Muslim communities in Germany and other communities. Firstly, the relations between the Muslim communities and the mainstream German society were discussed. The overwhelming response from the participants suggests that it is not possible to come up with a single evaluation of the relations. Particularly the young participants, who are Muslim Germans, suggested that this question does not make much sense in their case, as they consider themselves natural members of the mainstream German society. The general sense, however, indicated that the relations were not very problematic given the legal context that guarantees religious freedoms. It was also suggested that the troublesome historical background in Germany concerning Jewish community during the WWII and beyond created a further sense in the German political establishment to be more careful when governing the relations with religious minorities.

It was suggested that there were still problems in the relations that are mostly born out of lack of information about each other. In addition, some participants suggested that there is a degree of prejudice amongst a significant part of the German society concerning Muslims, and the relations tend to get quite tense particularly during periods when issues of fundamentalist terror and extremism come to dominate the agenda.

When we look at the most common phrases used by the participants, we see that they characterize relations to be 'open to improvement', 'mild', suffering from a 'lack of trust' on both sides, and not generalizable. Those who emphasized the need to improve the relations highlighted the need for enhancing platforms for dialogue. Another factor that was highlighted in this context was the importance of the bilateral relations between Germany and the countries of origin. Particularly, a Turkish participant emphasized the fact that when the political relations between Germany and Turkey get tense, it had a remarkable impact on the daily lives of Turkish Muslims in Germany. The suggestion was that governments of the origin countries should act in a constructive way if the relations between the Muslim communities and the German society were to improve.

The survey respondents appear to evaluate the relations to be weaker. In fact, more than half of the respondents suggest that the relations are either weak (44.7%) or very weak (7.2%) (Figure 11).

**Figure 11.** How Strong Are Relations between Muslim Community and the German Society?



### 6.2.2 Relations amongst different Muslim communities

Some participants suggested that the relations amongst various Muslim communities were improved over the past few years as they worked together for unifying causes (e.g. preparations concerning Islamic education in public schools). Some other participants, however, suggested that such constructive relations were very rare and even non-existent due to power struggles among different communities and Islamic organizations. The main reasons for the power struggles were listed mostly in relation to the legal context in Germany where only 'recognized' organizations were able to negotiate with the state or benefit from certain forms of financial support. Accordingly, this situation created conflict amongst the leaders of different communities and organizations as they compete to be legally recognized as representatives of the Muslim communities. In other words, due to this legal context, many Islamic organizations and communities see each other as rivals, instead of allies.

Another factor that was highlighted as the source of poor relations amongst different Muslim communities concerned the theological differences that were born out of different, and at times conflicting, interpretations of Islam. Participants suggested that some Islamic organizations were going as far as 'doubting the Muslimness of others. In a context of a large number of Islamic organizations claiming to represent Islam and Muslims, this situation exacerbates the relations. When asked whether they would believe a single representative organization for all Muslims is possible, the participants, while agreeing that it would be very beneficial to further the interests of all Muslims in German, were rather pessimistic about its practical feasibility (Figure 12).

### 6.2.3 Relations with other (Non-Muslim) Minorities

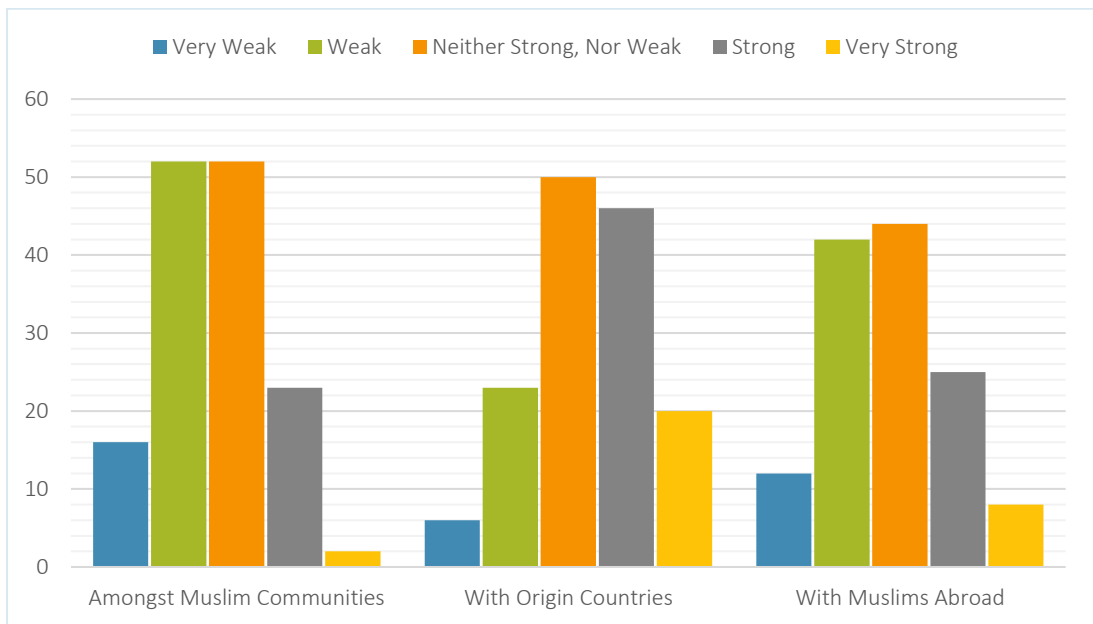
The general sense on this question was that the relations were on a minimal state, however, that it would be very beneficial for everyone if positive relations could be established. While most participants did not explain in depth why the relations are on such a low level, those who spoke on this matter highlighted the lack of knowledge of all communities concerning one another and the fact that most minority communities were leading quite closed lives.

### 6.2.4 Relations between Muslim Communities and Their Countries of Origin

Concerning this question, the participants suggested that such relations were continuous on an individual basis where most Muslims would keep strong relations with their respective countries of origin in their daily lives. When we look at institutional relations, i.e. relations between Islamic organizations and countries of origin, it was suggested that the active organizations were also trying to keep strong relations because of two main reasons. First, such relations are seen as important factors when attracting new members. In other words, the individual members of Muslim communities, arguably, were more likely to prefer organizations that have strong relations with their country of origin. Secondly, such organizations were seeking strong relations to be able to benefit from the financial support of their country of origin. This second reason was reportedly more important for the organizations that were established by Muslims from Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey.

There were participants who were sceptical about such strong relations, particularly to the extent that they involved financial support from abroad, on the grounds that such relations were making these organizations dependent on other countries and preventing them from developing their own agendas. They also claimed that such organizations were seen in a more suspicious way by the German authorities, and that this would negatively influence their effectiveness in Germany. Some participants disagreed with the view that considering strong relations with the country of origin as a barrier before integration was misleading. Accordingly, having a sense of belonging to the origin country and to Germany was not mutually exclusive, and if anything, a person who is more secure about their ethnic identity would be more easily integrated into the German society. Still others claimed that as long as a person did not turn his/her gaze away from their country of origin and towards Germany, they would be unable to integrate into their society (Figure 12).

**Figure 12.** Strength of Relations between Muslim Community and Other Communities



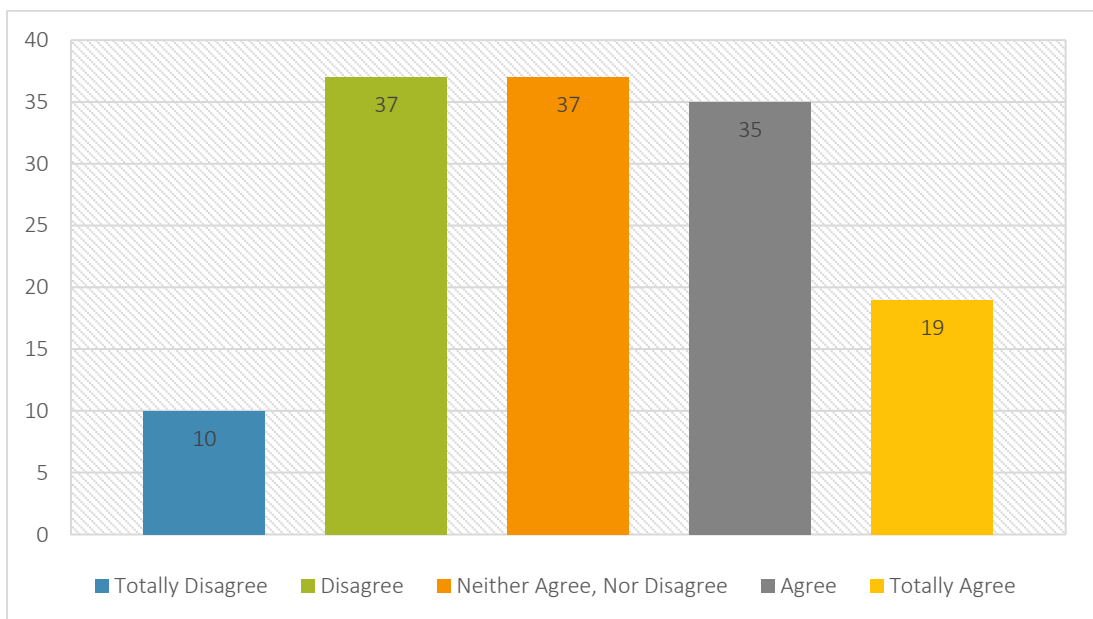
## 7 Future Projections for the Muslims in Germany

After discussing current state of Muslims in Germany in previous sections, this section will first discuss whether Muslims in Germany feel their lives are getting more difficult with the effects of rising far right discourses and strengthening Islamophobia around the globe. Then, the personal expectations of Muslims will be presented. This section will finish with a discussion on the future of Muslim diaspora in Germany as well as more generally in Europe and beyond.

### 7.1 Transformation of Life for Muslims in Germany

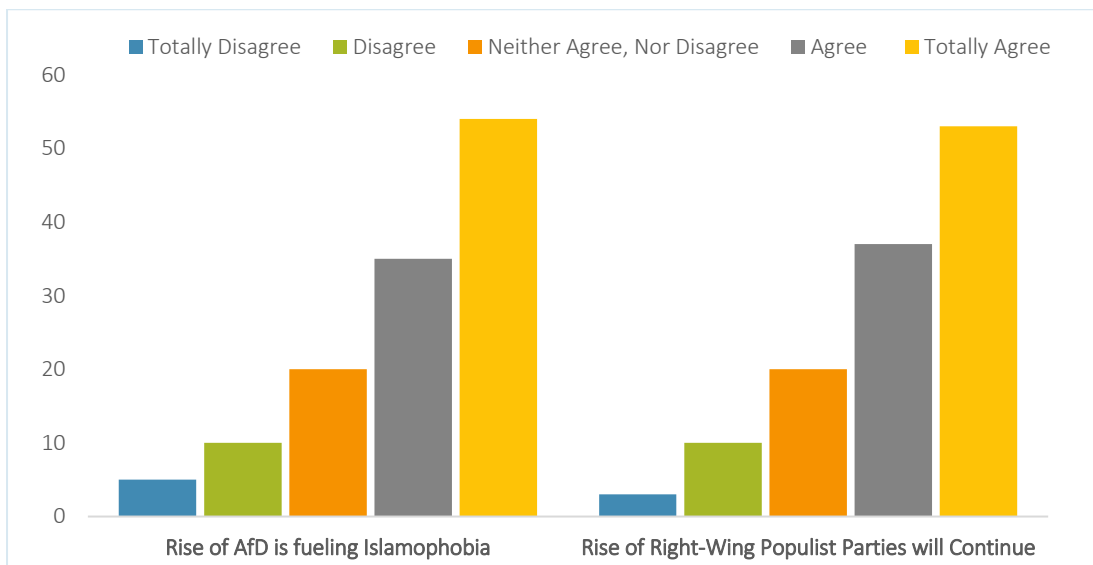
The first set of questions attempted to measure whether the Muslims in the country are experiencing any major change. When we posed the survey respondents the statement that “practicing Islam in Germany is getting more difficult” and asked them whether they would agree, we got an average agreement. In other words, while around one-third of the respondents agreed that practicing Islam was getting more difficult, another one-third disagreed (Figure 13). Moreover, the question returned a weighed score 3.1, which shows neither agreement, nor disagreement.

**Figure 13.** Would You Agree That Practicing Islam in Germany is Getting More Difficult?



Another issue of interest was to find out whether Muslims in Germany felt concerned about the increasing support shown to far-right parties such as AfD. Therefore, we asked the survey respondents whether they agreed with the following two statements: “Rise and electoral success of AfD will fuel Islamophobia in Germany” and “Rise of right-wing populist parties will continue in Germany”. In both cases, more than half of the respondents agreed with these statements, thus indicating that they are concerned about what is going on in German and European politics and worried about their future (Figure 14).

**Figure 14.** To what extent would you agree with the Following Statements?



## 7.2 The Future Projections and Expectations

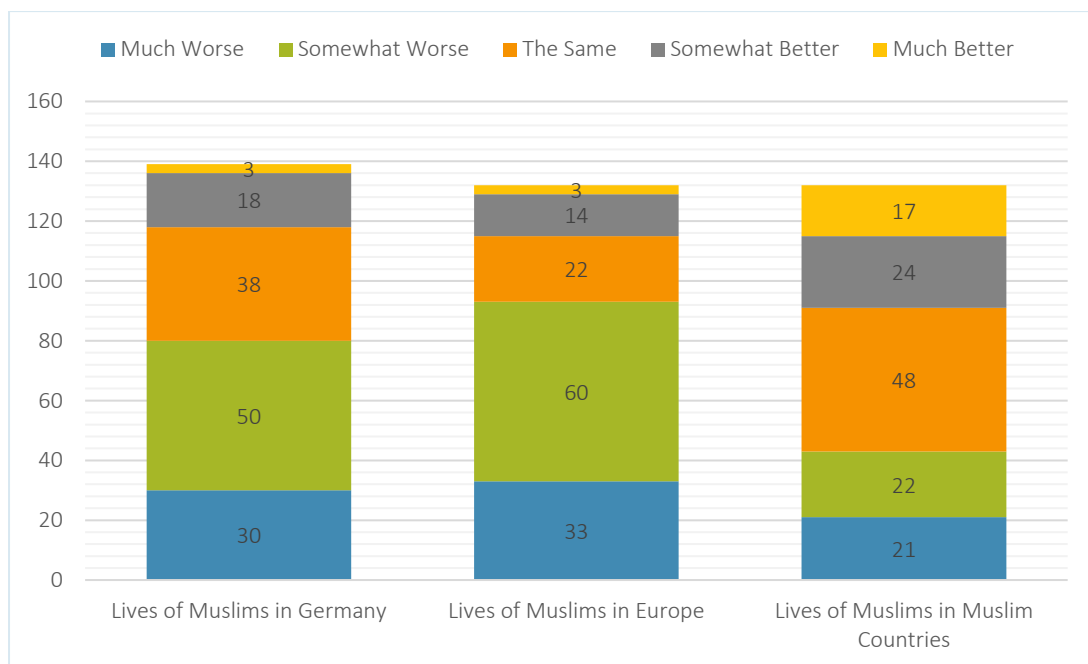
In the last part, the respondents were asked about their expectations from the future. They were asked to take today as a benchmark and indicate whether they were expecting the future to be better or worse, also on 5-point scale where 1 indicates ‘much worse’, 5 indicates ‘much better’, and 3 indicates ‘the same’. Specifically, they were asked to speculate about the future of three items (Table 11).

**Table 11.** How would you project the following in the coming decade?

	Average Score (/5)	Better + Much Better (%)
The Lives of Muslims in Germany	2.4	13.8
The Lives of Muslims in Europe	2.2	11.2
The Lives of Muslims in Muslim Countries	3.0	23.7

The findings are striking. It appears that there is a pessimism concerning the future of Muslims both in Germany and across Europe. Both of them produced negative average scores, where an average score of 3 would indicate that on average the respondents believe that the future will be on par with the status quo. This only happens in the case of the lives of Muslims living in predominantly Muslim countries, which show that respondents believe overall that the situation will neither deteriorate nor improve (Figure 15).

**Figure 15.** Future Projections of Muslims in Germany



### 7.3 The Future for the Global Muslim Diaspora

To the question regarding projections for the future of Muslim communities in Germany, the responses given by both those interviewed and the participants of the workshops demonstrate two overarching perspectives: a hopeful and confident outlook that could be identified as *optimistic* and a reservedly positive one that could be termed *cautious*. It should be noted, however, that many of the participants and those persons who were interviewed adopted both outlooks, approaching certain issues in a more optimistic and positive manner while remaining more critical, concerned, and cautious on some other issues.

Overall, it may be deduced that Muslim individuals and communities, representatives and spokespersons of organizations, and political and religious leaders are both optimistic and confident about the future. A smaller group of participants and interviewees, generally with an academic and political background, voiced some reservations and concerns, and adopted a more realistic, critical and cautious view. Yet, even these participants and interviewees were not pessimistic and negative about

the prospect and possibility of a better future, although firmly stressing that the acts and works of the Muslim community will define this.

A number of participants and persons interviewed projected a more diverse future *vis-à-vis* the Muslim communities in Germany. In the opinion of many who expressed this point, both Muslim communities' and the German society and states' response to this diversity will greatly affect the future for German Muslims. *Aleeza* expressed it as such:

The diversity will definitely increase and so will the efforts to meet the needs, problems, and demands of the elements that constitute this diversity, as well as the questions and issues that are caused by this growing super-diversity. I hope both interest and the financial resources that are channelled into addressing the problems and demands of this diversity will continue to grow. In this vein, I project a bright future for Muslims in Germany.

Although causing some concern, in the German context, the rise of far-right politics has not shaken the belief in European democracy. *Aleeza*, expressed this belief in the following words:

“I am hopeful about the future. True, about 13% of the population voted for the AFD [the far-right political party in Germany], but more than 80% of the society went for democratic parties. The AFD's electoral success is not to be overlooked but Germany has a very strong democracy, and this democracy will protect Muslims in Germany with the same power. Muslims are prospering in Germany and they will continue to prosper.”

A better future was possible if the Muslim communities resolved their internal conflicts, hostilities, and rivalries. Many participants and interviewees expressed that their reservations about the future were more a result of internal tensions and the lack of interaction within the community, and a better future was dependent on intra-community developments, political activism and participation.

According to one of the interviewees in Berlin, *Aleeza*, the work and activities of Muslims in the political realm will define their future. “If they become politically more active and participate in formal politics, become party members and take their place in decision making processes instead of remaining as mere observers and reactors, the future will definitely be better for Muslims in Germany.” Furthermore, according to *Aleeza*, Muslims should not opt for establishing their own parties since this will bring only further segregation. The Muslim community is a part of Germany, and so should be the politics that Muslims proactively participate in, articulate, and produce.

Another interviewee, a German policy-maker and the head of an Islamic Studies Desk at a major German think-tank, *Hans*, put the importance of Muslim attitude towards the legal and political framework, particularly when attending the problems of their community, in a felicitous way:

People tend to look at some vague discussions on social and philosophical issues and very few of them look into the details: the details of the constitutional aspects, what legal requirements are necessary in order to establish religious practice here, how to build a mosque, what is the legal frame for such initiation? When we ask the members of the Muslim community how to build a mosque in Germany, they often respond that it is banned to build mosques. Nobody bans that. It is all about parking lots and building requirements. To make Islam a religion in Germany and give it a home here, the Muslim



community needs good lawyers and a lot of social activity, and fewer politicians, talk shows and less public talk.

There are also those who are concerned and critical, yet not hopeless. The responses in this group revolved mostly around a criticism of both host societies and the Muslim communities. The future will be determined by the collaboration, efforts, and the mutual investment and acceptance of these two sides. The response of *Hans* captures this point well:

“In the future there will be more diversity and I hope we will find ways to deal with that diversity. I hope we will be able to establish Muslim life here, in Germany, without challenging what Germany stands for.”

According to the *Hans*, this could be achieved only with the collaboration of the Muslim communities. These communities “should understand and accept that this is a democratic and secular society and criticism and criticism of religion is allowed—something very difficult to explain to certain members of the Muslim community.” According to *Hans*, in short, “Muslims should accept that they have to adapt and fit into the system.”

*Hans* maintained that the state and the society, too, have many responsibilities: they “should understand and accept that Islam and Muslims are here, and here for good.” In the view of this interviewee, the real challenge is not the hackneyed debate of democracy and violence but mutual acceptance and participation. Both parties, the Muslim communities and the society, have work and responsibilities. *Hans* projected more heated debates and a further rise in Islamophobia and anti-immigrant sentiments, reactions, and politics in the future and stated that “the only way to deal with these is providing a robust legal and political framework.”

The general optimistic outlook of community leaders, experts, spokespersons, and activists leaves its place to an overwhelming pessimism among the public. According to the findings of the GMD Berlin survey, only around 14% of participants believed that the future would be better for Muslims (2% much better and 11.8% somewhat better). Just over 25% of participants stated that they expected no difference. The figure for those who projected the future to be worse was dramatically high, with around 20% believing it would be much worse and over 33% somewhat worse. This stark contrast between the future projections of the public and more prominent figures and representatives (spokespersons, academicians, leaders, activists, and the like) that participated in workshops and interviews is a question to be addressed in of itself.

## 8 Conclusions and Recommendations

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Theoretically and conceptually, is it possible to speak about a Muslim diaspora? If so, is there a Muslim diaspora, i.e. a global community of Muslims who live in predominantly non-Muslim countries where they or their family members moved in the past century? What does it mean to be a member of a Global Muslim Diaspora? Alternatively, does it not exist, even if it conceptually can? If so, why not? What are the psychological, social, cultural, political factors that prevent such a diasporic community, or at least the idea of such a community, from emerging? These were some of the questions that guided this research from the outset. Therefore, in the fieldworks, we asked those persons interviewed, workshop participants, and survey respondents to tell us whether they have ever heard of such a concept; what they think about it; whether they felt themselves to be a member of a Muslim diaspora; and if not, why not?

As warranted by the complexity and political nature of the concept, we received a wide variety of responses from a wide variety of individuals. Overall, a slight majority of the participants of our research did not believe that “A Muslim Diaspora” exists. Rather, the majority appear to believe that it is not appropriate to speak of a Muslim diaspora. Perhaps, some suggest, it is possible to speak of Muslim diasporas- a number of distinct diasporic communities, loosely bound by the common identity of Islam. While acknowledging the relevance of the concept of diaspora for Muslim communities living across Europe and in other predominantly non-Muslim societies, many take issue with the sense of homogeneity, which the concept of a Muslim Diaspora implies.

The main reasons for those individuals who either rejected the existence of or remained reluctant to say they are a member of a Muslim Diaspora include the following:

- The perceived negative connotations of the concept of diaspora,
- The lack of necessity for organization as a diaspora,
- The diversity of the Muslim communities,
- Potentially negative implications of employing the concept of Muslim diaspora.

For many, the concept of diaspora has a number of negative connotations, which reduces both its usefulness to characterize objectively Muslim communities in Germany and its ability to attract members of such communities to self-identify themselves. These include foreignness and alienation to their new societies as the term diaspora is perceived to imply that “home” is elsewhere. The concept is also perceived to imply a sense of temporariness as implies a return to this “home” that is elsewhere. Therefore, many respondents suggested, it was not appropriate to refer to them as diasporas since they consider their future to be in their respective countries of residence, rather than elsewhere.

In addition, there were warnings about the potential risks and negative impacts of using such a concept. Some participants of the Berlin workshop, for instance, suggested that such a conception of a Muslim diaspora would be negative and even hurtful as those who see Muslims to be alien to the German mainstream society (*Mehrheitsgesellschaft*) might use it. Accordingly, such a conception would strengthen the tendency to see Muslims as a homogenous foreign identity, one that can never be fully integrated into the German culture and identity. This would in turn help those who discriminate against Muslims and project them as essentially un-integratable 'others'.

There was also number of individuals within the participants of the fieldwork who suggested that it was indeed possible to talk about a Muslim diaspora. Even in the absence of a unified vision concerning where home is or a desire to go back to it one day. What defines a diaspora is the common identification with a single identity. For many participants, this was clearly the case for Muslims. Regardless of ethnic background, language spoken, or theological beliefs held; Muslim communities are unified by Islam and their religious identity. When confronted with the arguments concerning the negative connotations of the concept of diaspora or the potential risks of employing the concept in reference to Muslim communities, these participants failed to see any substantial negative effects. According to their view, being a member of a diaspora as well as a member of the host society was not mutually exclusive. One can consider themselves as a member of the Muslim Diaspora, a global community defined by religious identity, as well as a member of the German society.

The findings of this study suggest that the concept of a Muslim diaspora is not in wide circulation in Germany. However, when individuals were introduced to this concept and asked to reflect on it, slightly more than half responded negatively to the concept. A significant proportion of the respondents suggested that the concept of diaspora was relevant for the Muslim communities in Europe, and being Muslim does create a shared identity through which they identify themselves and shape their lives.

### **Differences across Generations and Process of Integration**

One significant finding of the fieldworks was that the national context is important in understanding how the Muslim communities organize their lives, perceive the outer world, and form their relationship with their various collective identities, e.g. being a Muslim, Turkish, German, immigrant, Berliner, etc. Although this could be seen as a mundane point, it needs mentioning to counter the sometimes equally mundane tendency to perceive the "Muslim communities" as homogenous groups. Not only the Muslim communities living in any one location consist of a considerable ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic diversity, just to name a few; but also the lives, experiences, demands, and troubles of Muslim communities are shaped by and manifested through the national context in which they live. This includes the historical background, political and legal structure, the dominant understanding of subjective matters such as national identity and sense of belonging, as well as the economic structure in which Muslim identities and lives are formed, negotiated, and re-formed.

Compared to other contexts, the historical background of the emergence of ethnic diversity and large-scale immigration of Muslims into Germany was radically different. Germany has been a nation-state, which historically emphasized the "folkloric" and "primordial" aspects of nationhood, and therefore was far less equipped to handle ethnic diversity. The immigration of Muslims to Germany was a product

of the bilateral labour agreements through which the so-called “guest-workers” came into the country in hundreds of thousands, permanently transforming German society. Since this migration was originally seen to be a temporary measure and newcomers were not expected to integrate into society, there was no significant initial reaction against them but as it became clear that these guest workers were there to stay, Neo-Nazi movements began targeting Muslim immigrants. This is a process very different, for instance, from the one experienced in the United Kingdom, where the mass immigration was a product of the colonial history and an initial strong racist reaction paved away through time. In Germany, the main collective identity is a strictly national one, which is defined in ethnic terms. This is evident, for instance, in the citizenship law in Germany which was strictly on the basis of *jus sanguinis*, which holds that only the children of German citizens could obtain German citizenship at birth, and the negative attitude in the country towards dual or multiple citizenship.

Similarly, the divergent historical backgrounds also played a part in shaping the profile of immigrant communities in both countries. Since the majority of Muslim immigrants in the UK were former colonial subjects, they were in some way familiar with the British context, culture, and language. Muslim immigrants coming to Germany, to the contrary, were far less familiar with the German context, and since they were expected to be temporary guest workers, they usually led segregated lives with no significant attempts at language acquisition on either side. This difference, naturally, had a remarkable effect on the later integration processes of not only the immigrants themselves but also their children and even grandchildren.

Many significant differences exist between first generation immigrants and subsequent generations, which help shape the experience of being Muslim in predominantly non-Muslim societies. These differences highlight several policy implications as to how to engage them. These implications could be briefly outlined here:

- *Command of Language and Familiarity with the System:* The first generation immigrants generally do not have a strong command of the host language and are not familiar with the political and legal system in the host context. Second and further generations, to the contrary, have a strong command of the language and are well acquainted with the overall system. In fact, the majority of second-generation respondents stated that German was their native languages. In addition, they received their education in Germany and see their future in this country.
- *Level of Integration:* The majority of first generation Muslims followed what can be termed a national understanding of Islam in the host contexts. They go to the mosques of their respective countries of origin and generally live a more conservative life. Second or further generation Muslims, on the other hand, are much better adapted to life in the host country and show greater degrees of social and cultural integration.
- *Out-Group Social Interaction:* While vast majorities of first generation Muslims tend to live closed social lives predominantly interacting with their co-ethnics in their mother tongue, second generation Muslims display much greater levels of social interaction with other social groups, including other Muslim communities. In terms of their attitudes as well, second and

further generation Muslims manifest a much greater aptitude and openness to communication with other Muslim communities and wider society.

- *Multiple Identities:* It was repeatedly mentioned in the fieldworks that ethnic and national identities were far more salient and important for the first generation Muslims. While this was not entirely different for second generations, it appears that they were far better adapted to living with multiple and hybridized identities. In other words, while for a majority of the second generation Muslims ethnic and national identities are still very much important, they are better able to identify themselves in reference to their religion, residential neighbourhood, or socio-economic status compared to their parents and grandparents.
- *Relations with Other Countries:* Finally, while first generation Muslims tend to have established strong and stable relations with their countries of origin, second generation Muslims are more open to having relations on a truly transnational and global basis. This is partly due to the changing identifications of the second generations and the phasing out of the strong emotional bonds with their country of origin, and partly due to the fact that younger generations are better in mastering the technological advancements in communication, most notably in their use of social media. As a result, not only are they far more aware of the developments taking place around the globe, they are also more willing and better able to communicate with other Muslim communities and wider world.

### **Verneacularization or Localization of Muslim Identities**

Another significant finding of the fieldwork was that there were a great variety of understandings and interpretations concerning the “Muslim way of life” within the diaspora. This is not a surprising finding given that there is a degree of diversity in how different individuals and groups have interpreted Islam, its theological teachings, and its practices around the world, including Muslim countries. What is different in the diasporic context is that the level of diversity is higher and the context of practice is far more dynamic. The diasporic experience means that other interpretations are often more visible and more integrated, and the pace of change and hybridization is faster due to the more fluid context of self-identification that is prevalent for Muslims in the diaspora.

Some examples would help illustrate this point. In our fieldwork in Berlin, we have come across a number of mosques that use multiple languages in their services in order to attract Muslims from different ethnic communities. While there were many mosques, still using a single language in their services such as Turkish, in addition to the Arabic used in prayers, and an increasing number of mosques that uses Turkish, and German in addition to Arabic in *hutba* and other sermons.

In addition to these developments, which can be seen as natural changes and efforts by the Muslim communities to reach out to a larger Muslim base, the host country institutions also appear to be pushing in this direction of verneacularization or localization of Muslim identities. A number of these efforts could be considered nationalist reflexes in trying to curb the influence of various countries of origin on the Muslim communities living in their countries. In Germany, for example, there appears to be a concern to try to replace the system in which Turkey assigns Imams and other Muslim clerics dealing with the Turkish German community. In the same manner, Germany is trying to establish

theological chairs in their universities and higher education institutions to educate “their own” Islamic scholars. The policy-makers we have talked to emphasized that allowing Turkish Imams and religious teachers to provide services in Germany was making it more difficult for German-Turkish children to integrate. They argued that these clerics were teaching the children a Turkish version of Islam and that these children needed to be taught by Islamic clerics who were themselves raised in Germany so that they would relate to the complexities of Muslim lives in Germany.

Whether through the efforts of the host country governments or through the cultural and social transformations that young Muslim generations are experiencing in the diasporic context, it appears inevitable that they will develop their own understanding of what it means to be a Muslim. This transformation of Islam for the younger generations in the diaspora needs to be taken into account and Muslim countries as well as organizations like the OIC need to contribute constructively to this process of the localization of Islam for members of the Muslim diaspora.

### I. An Important Note on Methodology

The methodologies used in all fieldworks are described in detail in the GMD general report titled “Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-OIC Countries: Diagnostics, Concepts, Scope and Methodology”. It should be noted that, the first three country field studies, i.e. the UK, France and Germany, were initially conceived of as pilot studies. Therefore, there were some significant revisions made to some of the research instruments after the pilot studies.

The most important of such revisions concerns the Survey, which include two changes. First of all, in the first three pilot studies the sample size for the Survey was 150 since the Survey was designed to be complementary and not representative. However, to increase the explanatory and predictive power of the Survey, in the next country fieldworks the sample size was enlarged to 400.

Secondly, some significant revisions were made to the Survey Questionnaire itself. A number of questions in the initial questionnaire were removed and a number of new questions were introduced, with some questions being revised in various ways.

As a result of these changes, the Surveys results obtained in the UK, France, and Germany, on the one hand, and those obtained from Australia, Japan, South Africa, Argentina, Spain, the United States, and Canada, on the other, are not strictly speaking comparable.

## II. List of Interviewees in Berlin

Pseudonym	Who	Gender	Date
Sara	Muslim Academic, worked on Muslim communities in Germany and health	Female	11.10.2017
Rida	Muslim Academic, worked on Muslim politicians in the German Parliament	Female	11.10.2017
Aleeza	Muslim Politician, Member of the German Federal Parliament	Female	11.10.2017
Hamza	Muslim NGO Chairman, Head of one of the largest Muslim NGOs in Germany	Male	12.10.2017
Aamir	Muslim NGO Member, Member of Executive Committee of a Muslim NGO	Male	12.10.2017
Sana	Muslim Teacher, Member of a Muslim NGO	Female	12.10.2017
Hans	German Policy-Maker, Head of a Islamic Studies Desk at a Major German Think-Tank	Male	13.10.2017
Abbas	Muslim NGO Chairman, Head of a Faith-Based NGO	Male	13.10.2017
Angela	German Human-Rights Advocate, Lawyer Working on Anti-Islam Discrimination at a German NGO	Female	13.10.2017



### III. Calculation of Composite Scores

The calculation for the following survey question is done for the hypothetical responses:

**Q. How important are religious practices and rituals for a Muslim?**

N	Value	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
Very non-important	1	30	10	50
Non-important	2	30	20	40
Neither non-important, nor important	3	30	30	30
Important	4	30	40	20
Very Important	5	30	50	10
<b>TOTAL N</b>		<b>150</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>150</b>

Therefore, the calculation is done in this way:

Example 1:  $30 \times 1 = 30$ ;  $30 \times 2 = 60$ ;  $30 \times 3 = 90$ ;  $30 \times 4 = 120$ ;  $30 \times 5 = 150$

Total Sum:  $450 / 150$  (total number of responses) = **3**

Example 2:  $10 \times 1 = 10$ ;  $20 \times 2 = 40$ ;  $30 \times 3 = 90$ ;  $40 \times 4 = 160$ ;  $50 \times 5 = 250$

Total Sum:  $550 / 150$  (total number of responses) = **3.66**

Example 3:  $50 \times 1 = 50$ ;  $40 \times 2 = 80$ ;  $30 \times 3 = 90$ ;  $20 \times 4 = 80$ ;  $10 \times 5 = 50$

Total Sum:  $350 / 150$  (total number of responses) = **2.33**

Since each category received the equal number of responses in the first example, the composite average score yields the perfect medium score of 3 and shows that on average the respondents think “religious practices and rituals are neither non-important nor important for Muslims”. The second example average score, 3.66, reflects the fact that more people considered this question important; and the third one shows more people considered it non-important.

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